Marianas Southern Airways adds more flights. PAGE 3
Searchers come up empty after 3-day search for scuba diver off Guam. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Broadband in Northern Islands a step closer

Northern Islands Mayor's Office staff, along with Marianas Wireless chief executive officer Roy Ortizo, second from left, set up the satellite receiver for a demonstration at the NI Mayor's Office grounds last Friday. If installation is successful this weekend or next weekend, there will be broadband internet service available for the island of Alamagan and later, Agrigan and Pagan.
LEIGH GASES

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Satellite broadband internet service may be possible in the Northern Islands if plans to execute its installation this weekend or next weekend is a success.

The internet access will be powered by Kacific Satellite HTS broadband Satellite Inter-

See BROADBAND on Page 4

TRIP program is no more

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Over two years since its creation, the Marianas Visitors Authority has officially disbanded its travel bubble program, officially called the Tourism Resumption Investment Plan,

See TRIP on Page 1

2,000 military personnel in NMI for exercise

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

About 2,000 military personnel have arrived in the Marianas from the United States, Australia, and Japan to par-

See MILITARY on Page 4

Quake deaths pass 5,000 as Turkey, Syria seek survivors

By MEHMET GUZEL, GHAITH ALSAYED and SUZAN FRASER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADANA, Turkey (AP)— Rescuers raced Tuesday to find survivors in the rubble of thousands of buildings brought down by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks that struck eastern Turkey and neighboring Syria, with the discovery of more bodies raising the death toll to more than 5,000.

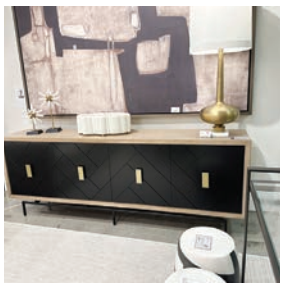
See QUAKE on Page 4

Emergency teams search for people in the rubble of a destroyed building in Gaziantep, Turkey, Monday, Feb. 6, 2023. AP

Source: BBC
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

INSIDE

BUSINESS
PIC Saipan is making sure that island gridiron fans will be the ultimate winner this Monday.
PAGE 11



GOOD HOUSEKEEPING
This year a number of trends appear at the Design & Construction Week in Las Vegas.
PAGE 14

LIFE & STYLE
Salman Rushdie gives his first interview since being stabbed repeatedly in August last year.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Palacios appoints Sablan as DCCA secretary, 4 others

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang have appointed Mary Margaret Sablan as the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs secretary and named four others to other Cabinet positions.

Palacios nominated former Marianas Public Land Trust board chair Alvaro Santos and Tinian businessman Phillip Mendiola Long to serve as a member of the MPLT board to represent Saipan and Tinian, respectively.

For the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., the governor appointed former Commonwealth Development Authority board chair Pedro Itibus to serve as a member of the CUC board to represent Saipan/the Carolinian community.

Palacios nominated Joseph Patrick P. Fitial to serve as a member of the Civil Service Commission representing the 3rd Senatorial District, or Saipan.

The appointment of Sablan, Santos, Mendiola, Itibus, and Fitial requires the advice and consent of the Senate. Until then, they will be serving their posts in an acting capacity.

Palacios and Apatang informed Senate president Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) last Feb. 2 that they are confident that Sablan is qualified to fulfill the vital responsibilities of DCCA.

Saipan Tribune learned that Sablan used to work at DCCA under Juan Babauta during the administration of former governor Benigno R. Fitial. Sablan works at the Historic Preservation Office.

Regarding the appointment of Santos to the MPLT board, Palacios told DeLeon Guerrero last Feb. 1 that, if confirmed by the Senate, the appointee would serve the remainder of Martin B. Ada's term, which will expire on Jan. 9, 2024.

Ada, former senator Maria Frica T. Pangelinan, and Peter Q. Cruz recently resigned from the MPLT board, leaving the board with just two trustees, which means they cannot have a quorum.

Alvaro used to serve as MPLT board chair.

In 2012, the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations rejected his re-appointment to the MPLT board. Then-EAGI Committee chair Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Saipan) told the media in 2012 that Santos' re-appointment was rejected due to a questionable land purchase that MPLT entered into.

Santos also previously served as a member of the Commonwealth Casino Commission board.

With respect to Long's appointment, Palacios said that, if confirmed by the Senate, he would serve the remainder of Peter Q. Cruz's term, which will expire on Jan. 9, 2024.

Palacios said MPLT plays a very important role in the development of the Commonwealth, and that he has every confidence that Santos and Long will devote their time and efforts in the best interests of all the people.

Palacios said he and Apatang are confident that Santos' and Long's membership on the MPLT board is critical and that their nomination and subsequent confirmation by the Senate will ensure consistency and continuity in fulfilling the goals and objectives of MPLT.

Regarding the appointment of Itibus to the CUC board, if confirmed by the Senate, he would serve a term of four years from the date of confirmation.

Palacios said CUC provides the basic life-sustaining needs of the Commonwealth, and that he has every confidence that Itibus will devote his time and efforts in the best interests of all the people.

On Fitial's appointment, if confirmed by the Senate, he would serve a six-year term, which will expire on Jan. 9, 2028. Fitial works with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Human Resources Division.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS
Northern Marianas College president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ed.D., rightmost, Northern Marianas Technical Institute chief executive officer Jodina Attao, second from left, and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada of the NMI Public School System, leftmost, recently met with acting Labor secretary Leila Staffler, second from right, to discuss workforce development initiatives. NMC

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.7-magnitude quake in Saipan region

At 3:59pm on Feb. 7, 2023, a report of a 4.7-magnitude earthquake occurred at 15.831°N 145.940°E of the Saipan region in the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. ***(PR)***

5.0-magnitude quake near Yigo

At 12:44pm on Feb. 7 2023, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred 60 kilometers north-northeast of Yigo village, Guam. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Rip currents until Sunday night

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through late Sunday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present in east facing reefs of the Marianas. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The risk may briefly decrease today and tonight to moderate, but an east swell will rebuild again Thursday through the weekend.

The public is reminded to stay out of the water along east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(PR)***

SCC statement on APA suspension

"The Saipan Chamber of Commerce as the collective voice of our island's business community is deeply concerned about the Federal Aviation Administration's suspension of services provided by Aero Micronesia Inc. dba Asia Pacific Airlines last Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023.

"The suspension of APA's services will have a severe impact on our small and isolated community in the Northern Marianas Islands. It will affect access to daily mail, medicine, fresh produce, and other goods essential to daily life in our islands.

"On Febr. 3, 2023, APA issued a petition requesting for a review and relief from the FAA's decision. We are hopeful that the parties resolve this matter very soon as every day that service is interrupted is detrimental to our community," the SCC statement said.

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization with over 130 members. Founded in 1959 and incorporated in 1976, SCC is the largest private business organization in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. For more information visit the SCC office at the Marianas Business Plaza, fourth floor, suite 413, call 1(670)234-7150, or email contactus@saipanchamber.org. ***(PR)***

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Marianas Southern Airways adds more flights

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Marianas Southern Airways has announced the long-awaited launch of its Rota–Guam route and has added additional flights to its Guam–Saipan route.

Marianas Southern Airways, which continues to deliver on its promise to provide cost-efficient travel between the Marianas islands, has just announced additional flights to include the long-awaited Rota to Guam and Guam to Rota route.

Marianas Southern Airways announced Monday that it would be providing air service between Rota and Guam twice a week starting on Feb. 13.

Based on its announcement, Marianas Southern Airways will be flying from Rota to Guam twice a week with the first flight departing at 8:20am with an estimated arrival time of 8:55am while the second flight from Rota to Guam is set to depart at around 4:25pm and will arrive on Guam at around 5pm.

Meanwhile, Marianas Southern Airways will have two flights from Guam to Rota twice a week, with the first flight from Guam set to depart at around 9:25am while the second flight is set to depart Guam at around 3:30pm.

Aside from the Rota–Guam route, Marianas Southern Airways has announced that it will be adding an additional Guam to Saipan flight which will depart Guam at around 9pm.

According to Marianas Southern Airways, this will allow for same-day connections from Honolulu.

Aside from Marianas Southern Airways, Star Marianas Airlines also continues to provide air service between Rota and Guam.

Starting last September 2022, SMA reinstated its Rota–Guam flights. This was made possible by the collaboration of Rota legislators.

See FLIGHTS on Next Page

Woman found guilty of harboring alien files 3rd appeal

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A woman who was found guilty in federal court of harboring a foreigner who was a minor has filed her third appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals in hopes of overturning the court's decision against her.

Lili Zhang Tydingco, who was sentenced by the U.S. District Court for the NMI back in January for harboring an alien, has filed her third appeal with the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in hopes of overturning the court's decision.

Tydingco, through her attorney, Bruce Berline, filed her appeal last week.

According to court documents, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Tydingco last January to 90 days in prison and ordered her to pay a $100 special assessment fee.

Back in July 2022, a jury found Tydingco guilty of one count of harboring a minor alien. That was the third time the case was tried in court.

In June 2016, Tydingco and her husband, Francisco Muña Tydingco, were convicted of harboring a 10-year-old girl they brought from China to the CNMI in 2013. The jury found Lili Tydingco guilty of harboring an alien and Francisco Tydingco guilty of aiding and abetting his wife.

On Dec. 9, 2016, Lili Tydingco was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment while Francisco Tydingco was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment.

The Tydingcos then appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit which remanded their conviction for a new trial. The Ninth Circuit judges said the jury could have convicted the defendants on an invalid theory.

On May 10, 2019, the U.S. government opted not to pursue the charge against Francisco Tydingco and asked the federal court to dismiss the case against him. But the U.S. government refiled a superseding indictment against Lili Tydingco, charging her with harboring an illegal minor alien.

In September 2019, following two and a half hours of deliberation, jurors found Lili Tydingco guilty of one count of harboring a minor alien. On June 17, 2020, Manglona sentenced Tydingco to 90 days imprisonment.

The defendant appealed that decision to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which, in February 2022, once again reversed her conviction and remanded the case to the District Court for the NMI.

According to the Ninth Circuit, the district court abused its discretion in admitting a sham-marriage and witness-tampering testimony during the trial.

Kilili plans to bring the CNMI's educational, workforce development needs to forefront

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said over the weekend that he plans to focus on bringing the educational and workforce development needs of the Marianas to the forefront through his service on two subcommittees.

Sablan disclosed in his *e-kilili* newsletter that he will serve in the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, and the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development.

Democratic members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce held an organizing meeting last week, Tuesday, for the 118th Congress.

Sablan said that through his service on these subcommittees, his plan also includes focusing on quality education and investing in the success of the CNMI students at every level, supporting educators, and empowering greater opportunities for the workforce.

Last Tuesday afternoon, the full committee, including both Democrats and Republicans, organized and adopted the committee rules.

Sablan will also serve in the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs and the Subcommittee on Federal Lands after Democratic members of the Natural Resources Committee held an organizing meeting last Tuesday for the 118th Congress.

The delegate said that serving in his eight term in Congress grants him seniority to make subcommittee selections before most other members, which, he said proved valuable since there are fewer spots for the minority.

The next day, the entire Natural Resources Committee, composed of both Republicans and Democrats, organized and adopted committee rules.

Sablan spoke in favor of an amendment to the rules package that would have made it easier for witnesses to participate in hearings remotely. Republicans voted down the amendment.

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01	**NAP Office, Aslito at 8AM - 12PM**
11	**Sugar King Park, Garapan at 8AM - 12PM (NMC Annual Health Fair)** FREE Oral Screening & Fluoride Varnish for Children
15	**Oleai Sports Complex (Ada Gym) at 8AM - 12PM** **Last patient will be checked in at 11:30am**
FEB	**CHILD WELLNESS CHECK** For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
17	**WIC Clinic, Navy Hill at 1PM - 5PM** **Last patient will be checked in at 4:30pm**
FEB	**WOMANS WELLNESS CHECK** For women who haven't seen a healthcare provider longer than 1 year, pap smears, breast exams, pre/post partum care, resources & referrals
23	**Kagman Community Center at 8AM - 12PM** **Last patient will be checked in at 11:30am**

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OPA gets highest rating from APIPA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors has determined that the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor is in full compliance with Government Auditing Standards for the period reviewed, Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2020.

Full compliance is the highest of three possible ratings issued in an external control review, according to Federated States of Micronesia Office of the National Public Auditor audit manager Makereta Dyer and Yap State OPA chief investigator Bryan Dabugsiy.

Dyer served as a leader, while Dabugsiy was a member of the team of auditors from the APIPA that conducted a peer (quality control) review on the CNMI's OPA.

The CNMI Public Auditor contracted with APIPA for the review pursuan to a requirement that all audit offices issuing reports guided by Government Auditing Standards are required to undergo external quality control reviews at least every three years.

The expenses for the peer (quality control) review was funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of the Insular Affairs.

Dyer, Dabugsiy, and FSM Office of the National Public Auditor Rosadelima Alfons, who served as an observer in the team of APIPA auditors, informed CNMI temporary public auditor Dora I. Deleon Guerrero and the CNMI Legislature, in letters dated Jan. 26, 2023, that they completed the peer review and found that the CNMI OPA has received a pass rating. Organizations can receive a rating of pass, pass with deficiencies, or fail.

Dyer, Dabugsiy, and Alfons said that, due to variances in individual performance and judgment, compliance does not imply adherence to standards in every case but does imply adherence in most situations.

Dyer, Dabugsiy, and Alfons said that, based on the results of their review, it is their opinion that the CNMI OPA's internal quality control system was adequately designed and operating effectively to provide reasonable assurance of compliance with GAS and applicable legal and regulatory requirements for audit engagements during the period of Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2020.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

QUAKE

From Page 1

Countries around the world dispatched teams to assist in the rescue efforts, and Turkey's disaster management agency said more than 24,400 emergency personnel were now on the ground. But with such a wide swath of territory hit by Monday's earthquake and nearly 6,000 buildings confirmed to have collapsed in Turkey alone, their efforts were spread thin.

Attempts to reach survivors were also impeded by temperatures below freezing and close to 200 aftershocks, which made the search through unstable structures perilous.

Nurgul Atay told The Associated Press she could hear her mother's voice beneath the rubble of a collapsed building in the city of Antakya, the capital of Hatay province, but that her and others efforts to get into the ruins had been futile without any rescue crews and heavy equipment to help.

"If only we could lift the concrete slab we'd be able to reach her," she said. "My mother is 70-years-old, she won't be able to withstand this for long."

Across Hatay province, just southwest of the earthquake's epicenter, officials say as many as 1,500 buildings were destroyed and many people reported relatives being trapped under the rubble with no aid or rescue teams arriving.

In areas where teams worked, occasional cheers broke out through the night as survivors were brought out of the rubble.

The quake, which was centered in Turkey's southeastern province of Kahramanmaras, sent residents of Damascus and Beirut rushing into the street and was felt as far away as Cairo.

Sebastien Gay, the head of mission in Syria for Doctors Without Borders, said health facilities in northern Syria were overwhelmed with medical personnel working around "around the clock to respond to the huge numbers of wounded."

MILITARY

From Page 1

ticipate in the nearly two-week-long Cope North 23 military exercise, which is set to begin today.

The public can expect to see military training operations at all CNMI airports and the Jose P. San Nicolas Commercial Port of Tinian throughout the months of February and early March.

A handful of military personnel held a public hearing yesterday at the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting conference room to hear any public concerns about the annual military exercise.

According to Col. Jared Pasley of the U.S. Air Force, about 2,000 military personnel from the United States, Australia, and Japan have made the journey to the Marianas to participate in the trilateral military exercise.

"This is an average number, although we hope we could have more," he said.

Of the 2,000, over 1,000 men and women arrived from the United States, about 105 came out from Australia, and over 400 came from Japan.

Although there hasn't been any heavy pushback on the exercises, a lot of the questions raised include what the community could expect, how operations at the Saipan, Tinian, and Rota airports would be affected as a result of the exercises, and more. All concerns were addressed at the public hearings.

Cope North 2023 is a Pacific Air Forces-funded multilateral filed training exercise.

A previous news release states that the Pacific Air Forces is a major command of the United States that supports the objectives of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, or USINDOPACOM.

PACAF, in coordination with other components, allies, and partners, provides USINDOPACOM with continuous air, space, and cyberspace capabilities to ensure regional stability and security.

The Cope North 2023 exercise includes a focus on emphasizing the exchange and execution of tactics, techniques, and procedures, while enhancing the interoperability among assets, in a variety of missions.

These assets include U.S. components, as well as the Japan Air Self Defense Force, and the Royal Australian Air Force. The military exercise also serves as an opportunity to train for humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and contingency response scenarios.

The trilateral force envisions providing aid in the case of a natural disaster by establishing a "hub" outside of the area of impact where resources can be distributed to "spokes" that are established within the area of impact. In the exercise scenario, participants have determined that Guam will be used as the "hub" location and Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will be optimal "spoke" airfields to accommodate contingency response objectives. The primary goal of the exercise is to strengthen interoperability while developing the capability of the agile employment of forces to be utilized to assist operations during actual disasters and contingency operations.

TRIP

From Page 1

which was intended to restart the CNMI's tourism program.

During MVA's regular board meeting yesterday, all five remaining MVA board members unanimously agreed to the disbandment of the program.

MVA, however, still has an ad hoc committee that's dedicated to tourism resumption.

According to acting MVA chair Gloria Cavanagh, the disbandment had to be done for two primary reasons: one is that the CNMI administration that created the program has already been replaced by a new administration, and two there is no more federal funding to back this program.

"The TRIP program was a committee that was created by the last administration in which to use [American Rescue Plan Act] funds to build back and invest in our tourism industry. Today, of course, we have a new administration, and ARPA funding, as we have heard, is no longer available for us to use. So we have to go back to using the funds we have on reserve and, as of now, all expenses have to be approved by the board and not by the TRIP committee," she said.

Fortunately, Cavanagh said, the MVA has stowed away some money to continue to fund the tourism resumption investment but it will come at a cost.

"We're very lucky to have saved quite a bit of money over the years but it comes at an expense and that expense is going to be destination enhancement. Although it's [for] destination enhancement, if we look around the islands, it's obvious we still need it. So we're going to have a finance committee meeting to try to [determine] how much we actually need to do as much as possible with the limited funds that we have," she said.

The acting board chair stated that to date, MVA has about $6.2 million in reserve, with about $4 million initially reserved for destination enhancement.

However, the MVA still has obligations to the tourism resumption program that totals about $12 million.

"We saved about $6.2 million. So of that $6.2 million that we have saved, $2 million was for a building fund and over $4 million was for destination enhancement. Now, that would go to our commitments to the TRIP program that we no longer have additional funds for. Our commitments now is roughly around $12 million," she said.

Fortunately, before the end of the last fiscal year, the previous administration remitted about $7.2 million of ARPA funds to MVA, which will now go toward fulfilling MVA's obligations to tourism resumption.

"We do have about $7.2 million available under ARPA that was remitted to us prior to the end of the last fiscal year. The additional funds will come from the reserve funding. The disbandment will not affect the already established TRIP program. We do have leftover funding that we haven't yet spent and so it's just a reduction of the amount of promotions we can do," Cavanagh said.

BROADBAND

From Page 1

net Service through the local communications service company, Marianas Wireless.

Alamagan is one of the few islands in the Northern Islands that has a permanent population, in this case numbering less than 10. The rest who will be using the broadband service are staff of the Northern Islands Mayor's Office who will be visiting the island from time to time.

The installation on Alamagan was originally scheduled for last weekend, but due to choppy waters that made it a hazard for sea travel, the planned installation was tentatively moved to this Saturday, Feb. 11. If the weather and high surf is still imminent, it might be rescheduled again.

In an interview with Northern Islands Mayor Valentino Taisacan, he said he is excited for this step of progress for the Northern Islands.

"I'm really excited. It's not that much internet speed, but it's at least something to get us moving forward now," he said.

Alamagan is one out of three islands that may potentially have access to broadband internet as Taisacan is in discussion to have it also on Agrigan and Pagan.

Taisacan said that internet access is significant. "There will be more communication. Right now, we have SSB radios *(a type of short-wave radio equipment)*—on bad weather days, we can't use it. We don't really have a clear communication between islands, so I'm hoping this will solve that issue."

Looking ahead, Taisacan is hoping to expand the range of the signal on each island "so it'll be easier to hook up to and contact Saipan when there's an emergency."

Last Friday, NI Mayor's staff, along with Roy Ortizo, chief executive officer of Marianas Wireless, set up a demo satellite dish receiver at the Northern Islands Mayor's Office grounds to prepare for the actual installation on Alamagan.

Ortizo said, "it was a prudent and critical decision for Mayor [Taisacan] to get the services of Kacific to put his remote municipality online and into the present. …I can now say that the fear of NMI isolation from the rest of the world is gone."

"This installation will be our second attempt to provide internet service after the first attempt to install it [on] Pagan last year failed due to inexperience in satellite terminal installation. This time, I myself will lead the installation," said Ortizo.

He also thanked Wendell Posadas from the Northern Marianas Technical Institute for his assistance with the service.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Kacific1 was launched successfully into space aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on Dec. 16, 2019. It's a satellite that was intended to provide broadband internet service to large swaths of the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Kacific Broadband Satellites Group was founded by CEO Christion Patouraux in 2013, and is headquartered in Singapore.

Kacific sells internet access via wholesale channels to government agencies, institutions, businesses, community groups, and households.

FLIGHTS

From Page 3

Back in May, Sen. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota) wrote a letter to SMA general manager Jose Cruz, stating that his office and Sen. Paul Manglona's (Ind-Rota) are ready to fund the airfare for a CBP officer from Saipan to Rota once SMA agrees to resume flights from Rota to Guam.

Manglona noted that the lack of a CBP personnel to conduct a preclearance check is one of the reasons flight service between Rota and Guam was temporarily suspended.

Previously there were no CBP personnel stationed on Rota or Tinian, since Saipan was the only point of entry and exit for international flights.

However, thanks to the agreement, a CBP officer will be flown to Rota every Tuesday and Thursday, courtesy of the offices of Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), to perform clearance checks, making the resumption of the Rota-Guam flights possible.

Searchers come up empty after 3-day search for scuba diver off Guam

The U.S. Coast Guard has suspended a multiday search for a scuba diver who disappeared Thursday morning off Guam's western coast.

The unidentified man, 35, remains missing, a spokeswoman for Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam, Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir, told Stars and Stripes by email Saturday.

He was diving with a colleague near Rick's Reef, where they were reportedly doing telecommunications contract work, the sector announced Thursday. The reef is between the villages of Hagatna and Tamuning.

"We extend our condolences to the family and friends of the diver during this trying time," the sector's commander, Capt. Nick Simmons, said Saturday in a news release.

The diver was last seen wearing a black wetsuit with orange fins, a rebreather and a spare oxygen tank, according to the sector. Anyone with information is asked to call Sector Guam's Joint Rescue Sub-Center at 671-355-4824.

The diver's colleague contacted the sector at 10:36 a.m. Thursday to report the man missing. The Coast Guard, Navy, along with Guam's police and fire departments, immediately dispatched teams, vessels and aircraft to begin a search.

First responders included fire department Jet Ski operators, boat crews and divers; Navy MH-60 Knighthawk helicopters; the Coast Guard cutter Frederick Hatch; and a 45-foot medium response boat from U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor, according to the report.

The Coast Guard also issued an urgent marine information broadcast to notify mariners about the missing man.

"We are extremely grateful to our local and military partners and good Samaritans for their tremendous efforts over the last few days," Simmons said in Saturday's release. ***(Stars and Stripes)***

CNMI SBDC, Guam PTAC host federal contracting training

The CNMI Small Business Development Center at the Northern Marianas College, in partnership with the Office of the Guam Procurement and Technical Assistance Center, hosted an Introduction to Federal Opportunities training last Jan. 30, 2023, on the island of Tinian and on Jan. 31, 2023, on the island of Saipan.

At the training, participants learned how to be HubZone and Woman-owned certified and how to register in the System for Award Management. Obtaining certifications in these areas will allow for local small businesses to conduct business with the federal government as well as gain an advantaged status when bidding for federal projects.

The training was conducted by Guam PTAC program manager Boris Hertslet, and attended by clients of the SBDC who are in search of opportunities to do business with the federal government.

The CNMI SBDC invites those who are not clients to visit their website and register to be a client at https://www.marianas.edu/cnmisbdc to avail of no-cost training opportunities and to receive first-hand basis notices to upcoming SBDC events. Interested individuals may also call the CNMI SBDC offices at (670) 237-6888 on Saipan, (670) 433-0657 on Tinian, and (670) 532-9513 on Rota to schedule an appointment for one-on-one counseling with one of our business advisers. ***(NMC)***

SBDC

The CNMI Small Business Development Center on Saipan take part in a SAM, HUBZone, and WOSB certification workshop conducted by Guam Procurement and Technical Assistance Center program manager Boris Hertslet on Jan. 31, 2023. This no-cost training opportunity was made possible through a partnership with the CNMI SBDC and the Guam PTAC Office.

SBDC

CNMI SBDC on Tinian participated in a SAM, HUBZone, and WOSB certification workshop conducted by the Guam PTAC program manager Boris Hertslet on Jan. 30, 2023. This is the first training of its kind sponsored by the CNMI SBDC on Tinian led by their Service Center director and business adviser Benjamin "Huk" Borja through a partnership with the Guam PTAC Office.

Free webinars on federal, GovGuam contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free webinars on federal contracting this month.

Webinars are held every Wednesday from 10am to 11:30am via Zoom. Zoom links are emailed to all registered attendees 30 minutes before the webinar.

■ Feb. 8, 2023—Federal Contract Opportunitie—SAM.gov is the portal for Federal Contract Opportunities. The Guam PTAC will show you how to use the website to ensure you do not miss any opportunities. Opportunity types, search filters, and search strategies will be discussed.

■ Feb. 15, 2023-PIEE/WAWF—Department of Defense vendors use the Wide-Area Workflow module in the Procurement Integrated Enterprise Environment system to create, submit, and track their invoices. The Guam PTAC will show you how to setup an account and submit an invoice so you get paid on time.

■ Feb. 22, 2023—GovGuam Procurement—The Guam PTAC will explain Government of Guam Procurement, where to find opportunities, and how to submit bids.

To register, visit: https://www.guamptac.com/news-and-events.php ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-016

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BACKHOES AND TRENCHER FOR THE ISLANDS OF SAIPAN, TINIAN AND ROTA

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of five (5) backhoes and one (1) trencher for the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to assist with daily operations for the CUC Water and Wastewater systems.

This project is grant funded from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs (DOI-OIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-23-016, Supply and Delivery of Backhoes and Trencher for the Islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 24, 2023**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

By ANITA HOFSCHNEIDER
HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT

Editor's Note: Reprinted from the "Journey to Care" series of the Honolulu Civil Beat. See the original post at https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/08/pacific-islanders-have-a-harder-time-getting-kidney-transplants-than-other-patients/

Patients with kidney problems often must spend several hours per day, three days a week, undergoing dialysis. Kidney transplants can save lives and return them to something like normalcy.

CORY LUM/CIVIL BEAT

Getting kidney transplants is harder for Pacific Islanders

» Kidney failure afflicts Pacific Islanders at much higher rates, but for reasons that some say amount to discrimination, they don't get transplants as often.

Just months into the COVID-19 pandemic, Ramona Beltran started a new weekly regimen: four to five hours of hemodialysis three times a week, a lengthy and exhausting blood-filtering process to do the work of her failing kidneys.

She waits for the Handi-Van in Laie to pick her up at 4:45am so that she can get to her appointment by 5:45am. She gets home between noon and 1pm, depending on traffic and how many other patients need to get dropped off along the way.

Her life revolves around medical appointments.

"I used to think I was superwoman," she said. "I could come home and go back and do all the other things that I should do. But I can't physically, my body just won't move. And I notice that if I sit down and I want to do something, it takes me a while to get up and start moving."

Beltran's life has been irrevocably changed. But there's something that could make it closer to normal—a kidney transplant. A new kidney would eliminate the need for long dialysis sessions, giving her back hours to spend with family or working.

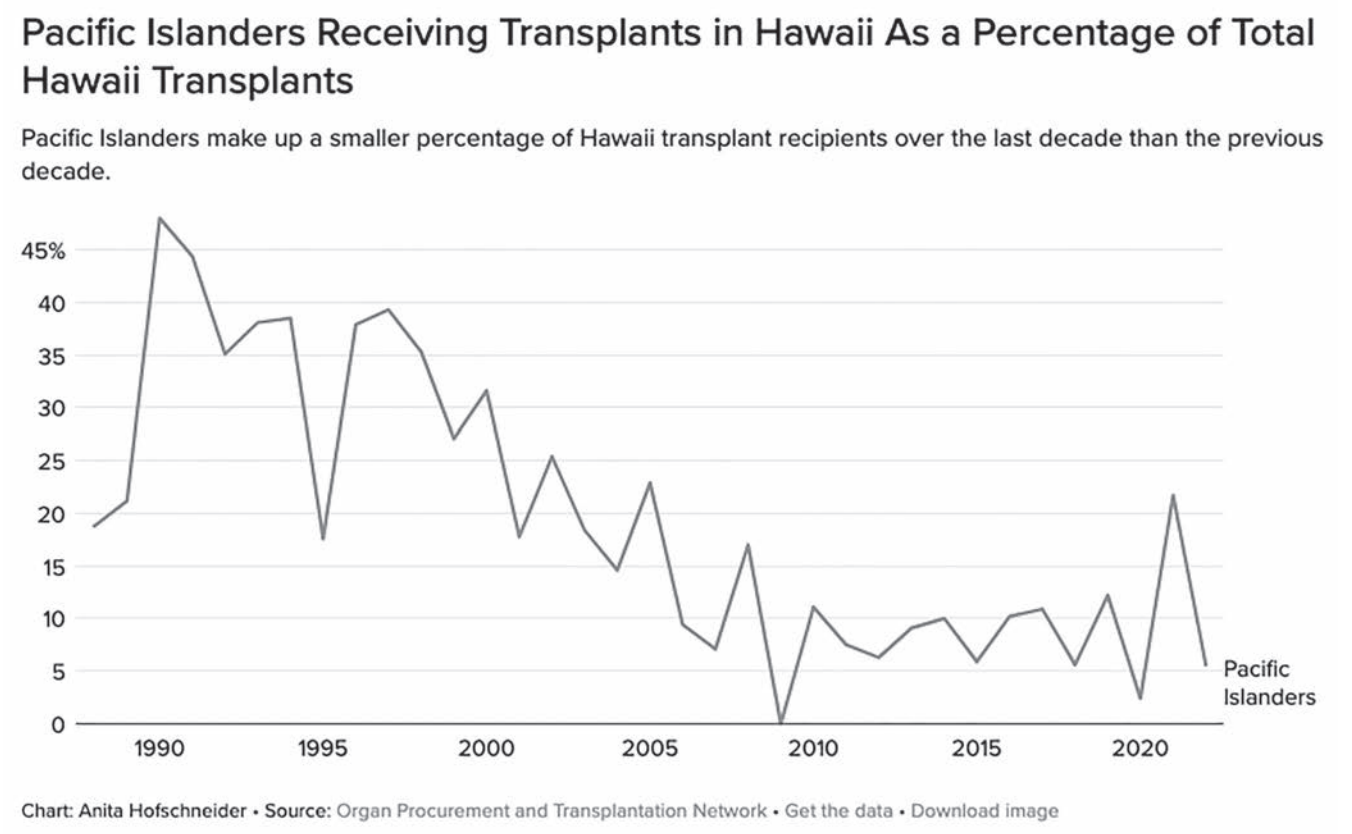
But the 60-year-old Native Hawaiian woman hasn't been able to get on the kidney transplant waiting list yet—she is still trying to meet the criteria.

A Civil Beat analysis of national data on end-stage renal failure and kidney transplants shows that people from Indigenous Pacific communities like Beltran who need kidney transplants are less likely to get them.

It's particularly striking given that Pacific Islanders are disproportionately afflicted by kidney disease. Nationally, they were nearly six times more likely to need a kidney transplant in 2019 than would be expected by their share of the population, accounting for 1.19% of new end-stage kidney disease patients. Yet, they got only 0.27% of kidney transplants.

In other words, Pacific Islanders suffered from kidney failure at a rate four times higher than their rate of getting kidney transplants.

In comparison, white patients nationally made up more than half of new end-stage renal disease patients in 2019. But the number of kidney transplants for these patients was 20% higher than would be expected from their kidney failure rate.



Hawaii health care providers agree there are some legitimate reasons that many Pacific Islanders may get bypassed. Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders are more likely to smoke and have other severe illnesses, conditions that can disqualify them from receiving transplants. Such criteria are in place to ensure transplants are successful.

But some providers say the strict criteria go too far and fail to account for cultural differences, such as requiring a main caregiver when Pacific Islander families often collectively care for their elders and sick loved ones. They note that body mass index limits don't take into account muscle weight, and financial requirements may eliminate patients simply because they're poor.

Critics say an overreliance on stringent criteria may effectively create structural barriers that amount to the same thing as discrimination, relegating many Pacific Islanders to suffering with little hope of relief.

"Even when it feels like we've done everything possible to prepare a patient for transplant evaluation and every team member from the pediatrician, nephrologist, mental health professionals to dialysis social workers believes a patient is ready and responsible for transplant, they are denied," said Alicia Turlington, a physician at Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services. "How can we not think of discrimination as a factor?"

Challenging criteria

Getting a new kidney isn't easy for any patient. Patients must meet a long inventory of strict and subjective criteria to get on the waitlist. Then they often must wait years for a kidney that's both functional and from a person with the right blood type.

In Hawaii, only The Queen's Transplant Center in Honolulu does kidney transplants. Its medical director Alan Cheung says fewer people donate kidneys in Hawaii than in other places.

Cheung said the selection committee that evaluates waitlist applications for kidney transplants doesn't consider race and ethnicity, and noted that patients from all backgrounds struggle with meeting the rigid requirements to qualify for a kidney.

Nationally, communities of color like Black and Latino Americans face well-documented disparities in kidney transplants. There's a lot less research on Pacific Islanders, even though they have long been known to have disproportionately high rates of diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease and kidney failure.

Nephrologists and other health practitioners in Hawaii say despite the lack of data on Pacific Islanders and kidney transplants, they've noted the disparities.

Getting on the transplant waitlist is often the hardest part for patients, but even when it comes to getting the transplant itself, Pacific Islanders also appear to be at a slight disadvantage. In Hawaii, Pacific Islanders made up about 10.5% of people on the kidney transplant waitlist locally over the past 10 years, but just 9.4% of people getting them.

Queen's took over the state's only transplant center in 2011 from St. Francis Medical Center and in the decade since, the percentage of Pacific Islanders getting kidney transplants in Hawaii has fallen. The opposite is true for Asian patients, who over the last decade were more likely to get kidney transplants than Pacific Islander patients once they made the waitlist.

Cheung says that Queens hasn't tightened its criteria

Continued on Next Page

From Page 6

since taking over from St. Francis and says the change might be due to better medical technology and online records that give providers more insight into patients' overall health and make them more aware of factors that could disqualify them.

David Derauf, a physician and executive director at Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services, who has been a physician in Hawaii for 30 years, estimates 60% of his Kalihi patients are Pacific Islanders.

Many struggle with diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease. But in the three decades he has worked at KKV, Derauf has never known a single patient with kidney failure who got a transplant.

"I am so eager to change that record," he said. "Demonstrating that we can provide excellent equitable care for this condition will alleviate so much needless suffering in our community."

Getting on the waitlist

The first step to getting a kidney transplant in Hawaii is getting on Queen's waitlist. The hospital wouldn't release a written copy of its criteria, but in interviews, Cheung detailed the transplant center's policies.

The bottom line—those who want transplants must prove they're model patients, consistently attending medical appointments and taking medication. They can be disqualified for having bipolar disorder and some other mental illnesses, as well as being homeless, conditions seen to make it less likely that they will follow post-transplant protocol.

They can't do drugs or drink in excess or smoke.

That's why Norvana "Cissy" Miranda hasn't yet tried to get on the waitlist. The North Shore Oahu resident recently lost 70 pounds so she could qualify to start overnight at-home dialysis in April.

She knows kicking her smoking habit is the next step if she wants a new kidney. For now, the 66-year-old says, "One thing at a time."

Apart from their failing kidneys, patients have to be in generally good health. Having a stroke or a heart attack can disqualify someone from getting on or staying on the list.

Both the BMI and the health requirements can be challenging to Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Micronesians in particular are more likely to get sick at younger ages with serious illnesses such as cancer and heart disease than patients of Japanese ancestry, whites and even Native Hawaiians.

Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders also are more likely to be homeless and have above-average poverty rates, making it harder to meet the financial requirements.

Norvana "Cissy" Miranda, standing outside her home on Oahu's North Shore, recently lost 70 lbs in order to start peritoneal dialysis, a type of at-home dialysis.

RONEN ZILBERMAN/CIVIL BEAT

The reasoning behind the stringent transplant criteria, Cheung said, is that there are a limited number of kidneys and the transplant center wants to ensure the patients who receive them are successful. The federal government grades the center based on survival rates.

Robin Miyamoto, a physician and professor at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, said Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islander patients are more likely to get on dialysis in an emergency situation, which can be overwhelming and may not leave much time for adequate education about transplant options.

She and other health practitioners say a key factor is increasing culturally specific and linguistically appropriate education for patients with chronic kidney disease.

"In an ideal world, there would be a lot more funding for the education piece of things, but it's really not rewarded by the current payment system," she said.

Even though insurance may cover the transplant itself, post-transplant medications may cost patients thousands of dollars depending on what insurance plan they have. Patients must be vigilant about attending all appointments to make sure their bodies don't reject their new organs.

Honolulu nephrologist Rick Hayashi said he understands why the requirements are so strict, given the brutal post-transplant recovery process. Still, he feels the requirements can make it difficult for people from immigrant or low-income backgrounds to get the necessary medical care.

The requirements are "somewhat of a barrier for access to care for socioeconomically disadvantaged patients, especially if they have no medical literacy or they don't speak English, they only speak Chuukese or something," Hayashi said.

Cultural and linguistic barriers

On its website, Queen's offers a half-hour video describing the kidney transplant process but doesn't provide the video or any other educational materials in languages other than English.

A 2018 state study found about 16% of Samoans, 18% of Tongans and 44% of Marshallese in Hawaii don't speak English very well, compared with 12.5% of the state population overall.

Elisa Gordon, director of transplant surgery at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, said not translating materials into other languages is one way that communities of color are prevented from accessing kidney transplants.

She noted that some centers, such as the Hispanic Transplant Center at Northwestern, have embraced a culturally and linguistically sensitive approach to serving Spanish-speaking communities.

Cheung at Queen's said that the center provides interpreters as needed for patients with low English proficiency.

Turlington from KKV feels that some of the transplant requirements don't take into account cultural realities of Pacific Islander families. Turlington worked with a team of health care providers several years ago to submit an application for a kidney transplant for a Micronesian patient.

The team helped the family find stable housing in part so that they could meet the financial stability benchmarks. Turlington and her colleagues made sure the patient was consistently attending appointments before submitting the transplant application.

But the application was denied. Turlington says the main reason was because the patient hadn't designated one individual to serve as caretaker. Instead, as was typical among Micronesian families, family members took turns taking time off work and driving the patient to and from appointments. Collectively, they ensured the patient was taken care of.

Turlington felt disappointed this was seen as a deficit, rather than a strength.

Cheung said the center encourages multiple caregivers but requires the patient to designate a lead. He said a single caregiver is important for continuity of care. When everybody is responsible, he said, nobody is.

David Na'ai, a nephrologist in Kailua, says a responsible Micronesian patient in her late 20s was denied a transplant solely because she couldn't designate a main caregiver. The woman worked at Safeway and lived independently. Na'ai wishes people like her had more options, such as funding for a stay in a rehabilitation center.

Requiring a main caregiver is "very black and white," Na'ai said, "especially in this environment that we live (in) here in Hawaii with different cultural practices and norms."

His patient died a few years later in her early 30s.

Getting off the waitlist

Just making it to the waitlist is often the beginning of a much longer ordeal. Michael Kauhane was on the waitlist from 2015 to 2020. The Aiea resident developed diabetes and hypertension in 2005, which he blames on a combination of poor diet and exposure to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam.

For five years, he did at-home dialysis every night from 9 p.m. until 7am, sleeping on his left side so that the tube could come out of his stomach and go into the machine by his bed. For years, he couldn't fall into a deep sleep.

Some patients on the waitlist die or get transferred to different centers or get diagnosed with other illnesses that disqualify them from the list.

RONEN ZILBERMAN/CIVIL BEAT

Elizabeth Mercy Kaleo from Hau'ula is hopeful that she'll get a transplant soon after getting on the waitlist this year.

Thomas Aldan, a nephrologist in Honolulu, says some of his Pacific Islander patients who may be qualified for transplants decide against them for religious reasons, saying they believe God will provide for them. Or they're put off by the potential costs, fearing an unknown price tag.

Elizabeth Kaleo, a Laie resident, is among those who wants to push forward with a transplant. She got on the list this year and prays every day that she'll be blessed with a kidney.

But nationally, as in Hawaii, it appears that even Pacific Islanders like Kaleo who make the waitlist get kidneys at lower rates. Over the last decade, Pacific Islanders made up 4.7% of people on the kidney transplant waitlist nationally but just 4.2% of patients getting kidney transplants.

COURTESY: RAMONA BELTRAN

Ramona Beltran has struggled to get on the waitlist for kidney transplants.

It's a small disparity, but Darren Stewart, principal research scientist at the nonprofit United Network for Organ Sharing, said it could be partially driven by a lack of living donors who have blood types and tissue that match Pacific Islander patients.

Donors don't need to be of the same race and ethnicity as recipients, but they do need to match blood types. Stewart said Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are more likely to have blood type B, which can make it more difficult to find donors.

Also, kidney donors are often family members or friends, Stewart said. In communities beset with kidney disease, where people may expect to develop it themselves, fewer may be willing or able to donate the organ.

More research is needed, particularly about Pacific Islanders often left out of data collection and analysis, Stewart said.

The numbers at Queen's may also reflect the availability of living donors in Hawaii. At Queen's, only about 10% of kidneys come from living donors, Cheung said, compared to rates as high as 30% at other kidney centers. He said he isn't sure why Hawaii's donor rate is so low.

Difficult recovery

Miyamoto from the University of Hawaii thinks she may know the answer.

"When you have higher rates of chronic disease in the population, you're just going to have less living donors that are available," she said. Patients and potential donors also need paid sick leave to get enough time to recover, which many workers in Hawaii don't have.

In 2020, Kauhane was admitted to Queen's twice to prepare for a transplant. Each time there was a problem with the organ or another reason the surgery couldn't happen.

Finally on Halloween, he got his transplant. Then came an intensive recovery process—his wife filled daily pill boxes with 97 medications and helped him get to appointments several times a week. Two years later, he's down to about 20 medications but still has to be careful about what he eats to help his body accept the strange organ.

At age 72, Kauhane knows that death is not far off—but hopes now it won't be from kidney disease. It has helped that Veterans Affairs has covered all the costs of his medication.

That's not true for all patients, Miyamoto said. Medicare stopped covering the post-transplant medications for one of her Native Hawaiian patients so she ended up rationing her medications to stretch them longer. Her patient has since died.

Beltran, the Laie patient, looks forward to going down the same arduous road as Kauhane. Two years ago, a metal port in her chest from emergency dialysis prevented her from getting a mammogram required to make it to the waitlist.

"That was kind of sad, because I worked so hard trying to get all the appointments done," she said.

She was told she would have to wait another year to try to get on the waitlist. She called last year to try to get on the list again but says she was told she couldn't enroll in a necessary course because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In the meantime, she's gotten used to going to dialysis, sitting in her recliner under the bright lights and bundling up in the cold air conditioning. She knows of others who have needed kidneys years before her and still haven't had the transplants. Her cousin just died after six years of waiting for a transplant.

Still, she's optimistic.

"I have my hopes up," she said, "I might be able to go back to normal."

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Direct superpower confrontation with China no longer seems a distant scenario

Ominous signs are growing about the potential for direct military conflict between the United States and China. It's not every day when a top military commander predicts in a memo that military confrontation could happen by 2025 with Beijing. But that's exactly what Gen. Michael A. Minihan warned a few days ago. Minihan heads the U.S. Air Mobility Command headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, which helps remind folks in this region that, even though China is way over there, any talk of war can have major reverberations right here in the Midwest.

Some of the nation's most crucial war-fighting forces are based near St. Louis. Scott is the command base for air logistics and refueling aircraft that would rapidly deploy in the advent of war. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's western headquarters is in the heart of St. Louis. And Whiteman Air Force Base is headquarters of the 509th Bomb Wing, home to the nation's B-2 stealth bomber fleet and the same bomb wing responsible for the U.S. atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that ended the war with Japan in World War II.

War with China has been and probably remains an extremely remote possibility. But the threat looms ever larger, particularly after a Chinese intelligence balloon was discovered maneuvering in the skies above the northern United States. Secretary of State Antony Blinken postponed a visit to Beijing because of it.

Tensions have escalated with China ever since its construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea and subsequent construction of naval bases. China then began interfering with international shipping, claiming encroachment on sovereign Chinese territory.

New tensions are focused on China's increasingly bold threats to take military action against Taiwan. The Biden administration is boosting military aid to Taiwan and forging tighter military ties with Japan and other Asian Pacific nations. The Philippines in January reached an agreement to restore the U.S. military presence there.

Against that backdrop, the Feb. 1 memo from Minihan takes on far more significance. Referring to Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping, Minihan wrote: "I hope I am wrong. My gut tells me we will fight in 2025. Xi secured his third term and set his war council in October 2022." Minihan outlined specific schedules for his command staff to ramp up preparations in coming months, warning against complacency. "Go faster. Drive readiness, integration, and agility for ourselves and the Joint Force to deter, and if required, defeat China."

The Pentagon distanced itself from the memo, but all the other preparations and China's balloon episode speak to a scenario belying any talk of calm and cordial diplomacy. Unless cooler heads prevail, the threat of a direct superpower confrontation is looming closer to reality, meaning this region could well find itself right in the thick of it.

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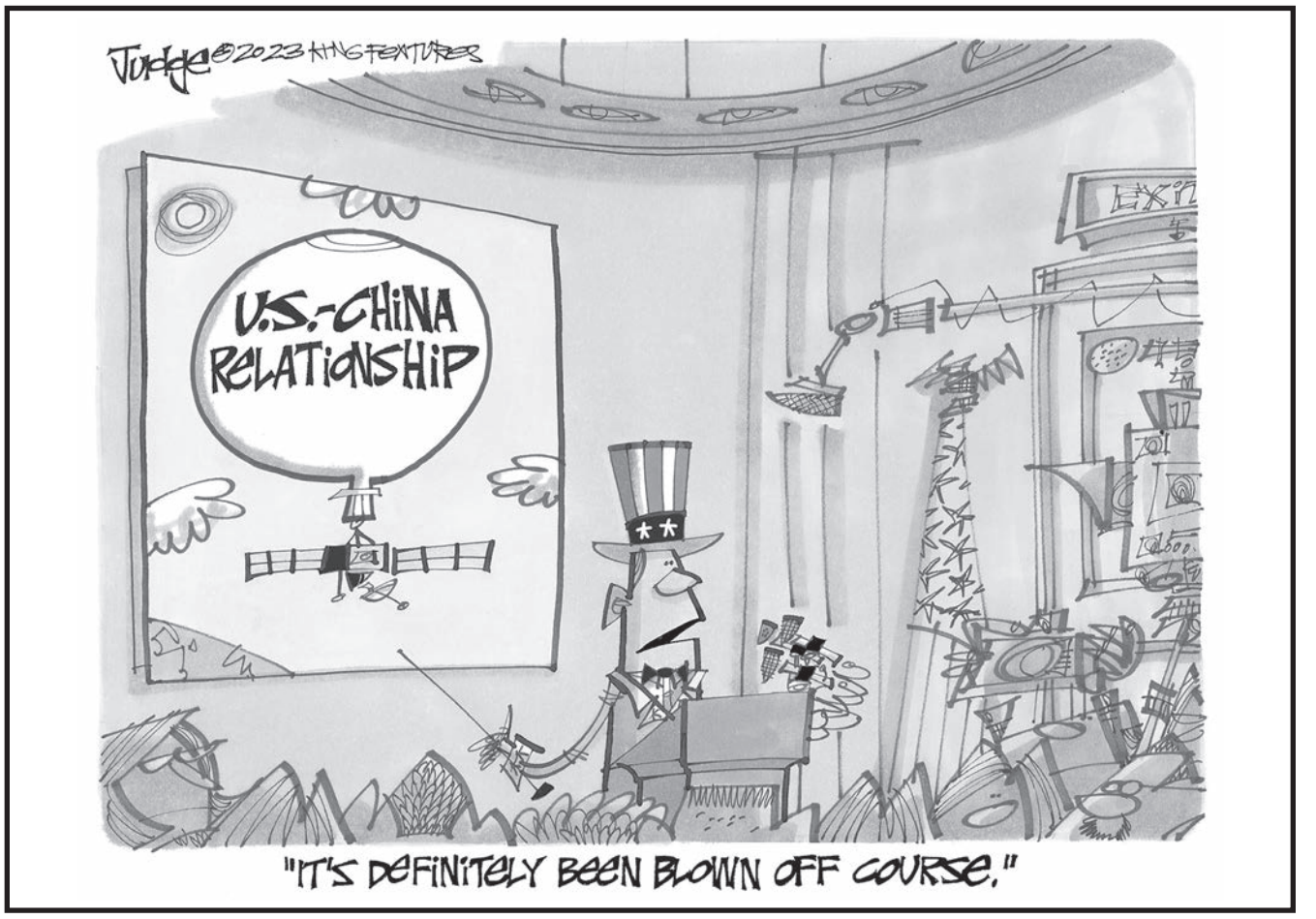


Bad news—lost and found

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.

Two big blips of downright infuriating news flashed across our news screens last week. But both vanished quickly, swamped by the next gush of made-for-TV stories.

No wonder most of us never noticed those big bad blips. Even our usual trusty watchdogs never barked. Until today.

Here's the still-urgent warning we need to hear and our pols need to heed: Beware of false profits!

And here's why: We are talking about two news stories at the intersection of wartime news and business greed that are really warnings about blatant profiteering and maybe even worse—greedy decisions that history may someday call collaboration that has been helping Russia commit its war-crime mass killings of Ukrainian families, children and elderly.

Here are the two big stories that got lost in last week's gush of horrific news about sicko mass shootings, sub-zero temps, and our loopy slo-mo fixation over China's worst-kept-secret spy balloon.

NEWSBREAK: Perhaps the most consequential news development of all was a report in the lead story in the upper right hand column on the front page of the Feb. 1 New York Times. It reported evidence and conclusions pointing to the apparent failure of the industrial West's sanctions that were crafted to devastate Russia for invading Ukraine. That huge news was reported with these words:

"Russian trade appears to have largely bounced back to where it was before the invasion of Ukraine last February. Analysts estimate that Russia's imports may have already recovered to prewar levels, or will soon do so, depending on their models.

"In part, that could be because many nations have found Russia hard to quit. Recent research showed that fewer than 9 percent of companies based in the European Union and Group of 7 nations had divested one of their Russian subsidiaries. And maritime tracking firms have seen a surge in activity by shipping fleets that may be helping Russia to export its energy, apparently bypassing Western restrictions on those sales."

Your favorite cable news presenters may have missed that major news, however, because, on that very busy news day, they would have had to read all the way down to the fifth and sixth paragraphs of the news story.

The Times reported: "Recent data show surges in trade for some of Russia's neighbors and allies, suggesting that countries like Turkey, China, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are stepping in to provide Russia with many of the products that Western countries have tried to cut off as punishment for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine."

The Times report also cited analyses by experts at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a respected Washington think tank, that Russia's civilians are "frustrated by high-priced or shoddy goods, ranging from milk and household appliances to computer software and medication."

Meanwhile, consumers in the United States and Europe have also felt the harsh effects of inflation driven by the consequences of both the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That inflation was fueled by gasoline prices that initially soared but have moderated, though still remaining high.

And that brings us to last week's second category of major breaking news—a string of reports that will surely infuriate all U.S. and Western consumers.

NEWSBREAK: One by one, the major oil companies announced this past week that in 2022 they have just earned the highest annual net profits ever recorded in the company's history— Chevron ($36.5 billion), Exxon ($56 billion) and Shell ($39.87 billion). Shell also said it won't be paying any United Kingdom taxes this year, due to offsetting expenses. Exxon, in contrast, paid a bit of U.S. income taxes last year, at an estimated tax rate of 2.8%. Nowhere near what you paid.

These oil giants also announced what they were going to do with a large portion of their most humongous-ever profits—pass the money on to their stockholders, by increasing dividends and stock buying back shares.

Late last year, President Joe Biden warned us that this was what the oil companies were doing. But Biden contended the oil companies could have lowered the gas prices that fueled U.S. and global inflation—and also led to higher interest rates. "It's time for these companies to stop war profiteering, meet their responsibilities to this country, give the American people a break and still do very well," Biden said.

But last week, Exxon's CEO contended his company was doing just that—by sharing its profits with the ordinary people who are its stockholders.

"There has been discussion in the U.S. about our industry returning some of our profits directly to the American people," Exxon Chief Executive Officer Darren Woods said, as reported by Bloomberg, in remarks prepared for a conference call about the company's earnings. "That's exactly what we're doing in the form of our quarterly dividend."

No wonder you feel like you're running on empty.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Did racism play a role in the death of Tyre Nichols?

If we had become desensitized to videos of policemen killing Black men, the death of Tyre Nichols has reawakened our feelings and demonstrated that we still have the capacity to be shaken and outraged.

The beating of the unarmed, handcuffed Nichols was brutal and shocking. We were also shocked by the deaths of George Floyd, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and many others. In fact, national traumas such as these usually provoke us to spend a week or two asking ourselves how they could have happened and how we can prevent them in the future.

So far answers to these questions elude us. But consider this subset of our American penchant for police violence:

What role—if any—did racism play in the death of Tyre Nichols?

Those who imagine that racism is a thing of the past in our country may have enjoyed some smug satisfaction from the fact that the five police officers who killed Nichols are Black. At first glance, they have a point. At last, police brutality is colorblind.

But if racism played no role in the death of Tyre Nichols, how else do we account for the brutality? Some have suggested that Nichols' death reflects a broader context of pervasive violence in our culture that transcends racism. They also have a point.

In one respect the United States is close to unique: It's hard to think of another nation that has never been invaded, colonized, exploited for its natural resources or defeated in war, if we ignore misadventures such as Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

We've always won. And while our winning has depended on hard work, perseverance, sacrifice and ingenuity, it has also relied heavily on the force of arms, in ways that occur to you immediately, just as they do to me. There's a reason that the Winchester rifle Model 1873 was marketed as "The Gun That Won the West."

As far as I know, we're the only nation that has embodied the right to own guns in its constitution, which has abetted our standing as one of the most violent and deadly developed countries. Violence is essential to our national game—football—and it serves as the basis for a great deal of our entertainment. Western movies used to be called "shoot 'em ups," and now that term is applied to video games that capitalize on violence, bloodshed and firepower as the only ways to win. Virtually every kid—the boys, anyway—grows up playing these games, including, probably, the five Memphis officers who killed Tyre Nichols.

In fact, it shouldn't surprise us if police officers raised in this environment absorb our culture's essential lesson: Action—even violent action—is preferable to reason. It's the first resort rather than the last.

In fact, a certain ex-president, addressing a group of law enforcement officials in 2017, patted himself on the back for supporting the militarization of police and commended ICE Director Tom Homan for looking "very nasty" and "very mean." Homan's officers, Donald Trump said, were "rough guys." He referred to a Chicago police officer by equating "rough cookie" with a "really respected guy."

Further, Trump said, to the audience's general amusement: When you're throwing a "thug" into the back of a police vehicle, "please don't be too nice."

So today's police officers inherit a history that largely depended on force and oppression to conquer the North American continent; they grow up in a culture that values strength and toughness over negotiation and compromise; their entertainments, from sports to video games to the cop shows on TV, are relentlessly violent; and the nation's chief law enforcement officer encourages them with a wink and a nod to be tough guys.

With this background Black officers have as much motivation for violence as white ones. It's almost surprising that the great majority of police officers behave honorably.

Still, it's not clear where—or if—our infatuation with violence intersects with our history of racism.

But as a thought experiment, try imagining five burly Black police officers beating a white man to death.

No, I can't do it either.

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Texas and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In celebration of Children's Dental Health Month

The following is a message from the Oral Health Clinic of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. as part of the celebration of National Children's Dental Health Month.

Dear CNMI community: This February, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Oral Health Clinic celebrates National Children's Dental Health Month, or NCDHM. NCDHM is a month-long observance promoting the importance of maintaining and improving children's oral health. Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are the most common chronic disease of childhood in the United States.

Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who don't. The good news is that cavities are preventable. Fluoride varnish, a fluoride coating painted on the tops and sides of teeth, can prevent about one-third (33%) of cavities in the primary (baby) teeth. Dental sealants, thin coatings painted on the chewing surfaces of the back teeth (molars), can also prevent cavities for many years. Applying dental sealants to the chewing surfaces of molars can protect against 80% of cavities for two years and continue to protect against 50% of cavities for up to four years. Parents should ask their child's pediatrician or dentist about applying fluoride varnish or dental sealants, when appropriate.

Parents and caregivers can also teach their children healthy oral habits. For babies, parents can wipe gums twice a day with a soft, clean cloth. When teeth come in, start brushing twice a day with a soft, small bristled toothbrush and plain water. Visit the dentist by your baby's first birthday to spot signs of problems early. For children 2 years and older, help your child brush their teeth until they have good brushing skills. Children should brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and drink water that contains fluoride. Finally, be a good role model! Children learn by watching. Be sure to practice good oral health habits, too.

To learn more information about oral health, call the CHCC Oral Health Clinic at (670)236-8369 or you can also visit cdc.gov/oralhealth.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mr. Jay Pineda for being recognized as and awarded Teacher of The Year at Mount Carmel school. Thank you for being a consistent model of a stellar standard for our profession of education. God bless you, your wife and children. *Omedetougozaimasu po*.

Dr. John B. and Yasuko H. Joyner
Principal, Northern Marianas International School

The roulette wheel of gun violence: Who is next?

Some advice to clear up any confusion you might have over recent events in the land of the red, white and blue: Assume that everyone is armed and dangerous.

That includes my furtive neighbors, the grumpy mail carrier, the impatient patrons in the queue at Walmart and the overworked clerks, the road rage guy tailgating me on the freeway and, last but not least, the 6-year-old hanging on the monkey bars at my nearby elementary school.

Fortunately, I have only been shot at once. One would think that it would have occurred on the South Side of Chicago, where I grew up, but my American rite of passage happened in the mountains of southwestern Colorado. A drunk cowboy was crouched behind a pickup truck with his equally inebriated girlfriend. He took a couple of shots with his rifle in my direction, although he might have been shooting at my dog. Thankfully, his aim was off. For a moment my anger at someone trying to kill my dog overcame my survival instinct. I began running toward him screaming my favorite obscenities, but then I thought better of it. He eventually drove off. I never saw him again.

When my adrenaline subsisted, I could hardly stop shaking. What just happened?

That was decades ago, before assault-style weapons became the weapon du jour of my fellow countrymen thanks to the efforts of the National Rifle Association, the lobbyist for the weapons industry and supplier of blood money for our spineless lawmakers.

The aftermath of the recent mass shooting in Monterey Park, California, in which 11 innocents died, follows the usual pattern of "thoughts and prayers," pleas for common-sense gun laws and the usual pretzel logic of why those laws would unfairly infringe on our Second Amendment right to own military-style, human-killing machines.

Hold on, friends. Breaking news! Another mass shooting in California! Seven people gunned down in San Mateo County! Suspect in custody.

California state Rep. Marc Berman immediately tweeted the following: "Two hours ago I joined my colleagues on the Capitol steps for a vigil for the victims of the shooting in Monterey Park. Before we've even had a chance to mourn them, there is yet another mass shooting—this time in Half Moon Bay. In my district."

Who can keep up? The new year is only a month old, and already we have had 55 mass shootings and 84 deaths, according to the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive.

The search for motives is cold comfort for the victims and their families. Known motives do not stop the next guy with a grudge and a gun from walking into his neighborhood Rural King and legally purchasing, say, a Sig Sauer M400 TREAD AR-15 rifle. This human-hunting weapon comes, according to Rural King's website, "standard with a 16-inch stainless steel barrel which provides incredible shot to shot consistency and tight groupings." Built right here in the good ol' USA.

Incredible shot to shot consistency? What does that mean? A better kill rate? More bang for your buck?

As for the 6-year-olds in your life, for only 20 bucks Amazon offers the 21-inch AK-47 Kids Toy Machine with flashing lights, shooting sounds and vibration.

"Pull the trigger and watch the rifle light up with flashing LED lights throughout. While trigger is held down, the gun will continue to make exciting shooting sounds. … Perfect for pretend play and a great accessory for military cosplay. Ages 3 and up," the product description reads.

Do those exciting shooting sounds include the screams of victims?

The roulette wheel of gun violence keeps on rolling, and all of us gathered around the table continue to lose. The house always wins. Awash in military-style weaponry, we nervously await the venue for the next massacre: school, church, mall, hospital, sporting arena, nursing home?

Nowhere is safe. Not even an airliner. Last year, the Transportation Security Administration confiscated more than 6,540 guns from passengers, a 10% increase from the previous year, and 83% of those guns were loaded. But be reassured. The TSA increased the maximum fine for a firearms violation to $14,950 from $13,910.

But that's not all. If caught with a gun, you could even lose your TSA Precheck eligibility for at least five years.

I must say that with the kinds of harsh deterrents now in place, I feel as safe as I ever have. In other words, not at all.

By STEPHEN J. LYONS
Chicago Tribune

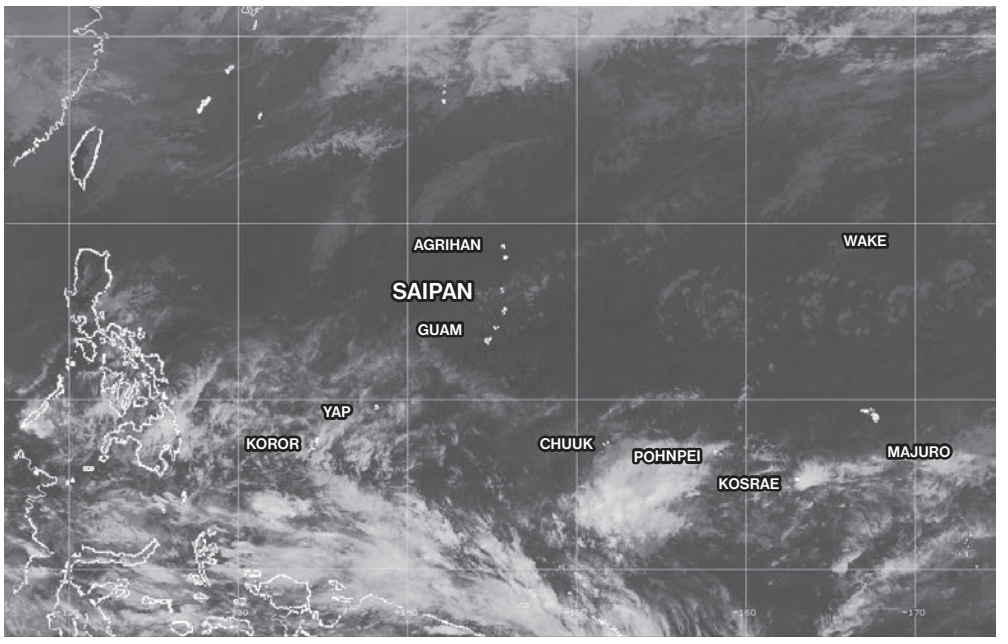
Stephen J. Lyons is the author of five books of essays and journalism, including Going Driftless *and* West of East.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Isolated showers. Partly sunny	Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Partly sunny
86º / 76º	86º / 76º	86º / 77º	86º / 77º	86º / 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:55 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery shows mostly cloudy skies, with radar detecting mostly light to moderate showers starting to enter the eastern waters of the Marianas this morning. Buoys are reporting sear around 8 to 10 feet and this matches well with altimetry.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	82° / 76°
Yap	Isolated Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Sunday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:19 AM	8:19 PM
Thursday	-	8:53 AM	9:06 PM
Friday	-	9:28 AM	9:54 PM
Saturday	-	10:03 AM	10:43 PM
Sunday	-	10:40 AM	11:35 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	41° / 19°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70° / 64°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	82° / 68°
London	Sunny	55° / 36°
Los Angeles	Sunny	80° / 51°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°
Melbourne	Rain	64° / 50°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 72°
New York	Cloudy	43° / 29°
Osaka	Sunny	48° / 37°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	48° / 37°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	43° / 30°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	57° / 46°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	50° / 35°
San Francisco	Sunny	63° / 45°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	34° / 23°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny/Wind	57° / 40°
Washington, DC	Rain	45° / 32°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:18 AM	Low Tide	-0.20
10:01 AM	High Tide	1.65
3:46 PM	Low Tide	0.83
8:49 PM	High Tide	1.61

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	1, 4, 5, 7
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.	

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.	

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

$1,500 worth of prizes at PIC Super Bowl Watch Party

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The ever-popular Gridiron Magical Squares at least year's Super Bowl LVI watch party at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's The Magellan.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Pacific Islands Club Saipan is making sure island gridiron fans will be the ultimate winner when they host their Super Bowl Watch Party this coming Monday, Feb. 13, at Charley's Cabaret.

Sponsored by Bud Light and MARPAC, the Super Bowl LVII event will have as much as $1,500 worth of prizes up for grabs that includes free room nights at the San Antonio hotel, water park passes, PIC brunch, and $500 in cold hard cash.

Cash is not the only one chilling next Monday, as a free beer is also included in the $35 entrance fee to go along with a Magellan breakfast buffet, halftime snack, and the aforementioned raffle ticket.

PIC banquet manager Ann Zapanta said they're pulling out all the stops for this Monday's Super Bowl Watch Party.

"Magellan Buffet has a lot of healthy varieties of breakfast, including an omelet station and healthy refreshing drinks," she said.

To fully maximize the Super Bowl LVII experience, PIC will be showing the game in several 30- by 60-inch TV screens with an LED 60- by 100-inch TV as the main screen.

PIC Saipan SEA manager Reymark Castro said football fans will be treated not only with an extraordinary Super Bowl LVII Super Bowl visual experience, but will also be pleasantly surprised by the audio experience as well.

"Being in charge of the lights, sounds, and tech, we promise an all-around experience from start to finish. We have surround sound with big TV screens and a 100-inch LED will surely make anyone feel like they are on the sidelines while watching. Imagine that sound system while playing the Super Bowl halftime show, it's giving me the chills just thinking about it," he said.

To purchase tickets for PIC Saipan's Super Bowl Watch Party, call (670) 237-5170 or go directly to their frontdesk. Doors open at 7:30am.

Australian, New Zealand leaders' talk focuses on China

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Australian and New Zealand prime ministers met Tuesday to talk about China's importance to their national economies, resolving to voice their disagreements with their most important trading partner that is becoming more assertive in their region.

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins made Australia the destination of his first overseas trip as his government's leader since his predecessor Jacinda Ardern announced her surprise resignation in January.

The visit to Australia's Parliament House comes two weeks after Hipkins assumed office on Jan. 25. He used a joint press conference with his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese to give an assurance that he was keeping New Zealand's foreign policy direction.

"Our foreign policy position hasn't changed just because there's a change of prime minister," Hipkins said. "The government foreign policy is the same as it was under Prime Minister Ardern."

A reporter put to Hipkins that Ardern had been reluctant to stand up against "bad behavior by China" and asked if he was concerned about Chinese coercion in the South Pacific.

"China is an incredibly important partner for New Zealand, a very important trading partner, and a partner in other areas as well," Hipkins replied. "That doesn't mean there aren't going to be areas where we disagree from time to time, and we'll continue to voice our disagreements with China when that happens and we'll always continue to strive to strengthen that ongoing relationship."

Albanese said Australia's national interests include restoring good trade and economic relations with China.

"Our position on China is clear, that we'll cooperate where we can, we'll disagree where we must and we'll engage in our national interests," Albanese said.

Albanese's center-left government is rebuilding Australia's trading relationship with China after bilateral ties plumbed new depths under the previous conservative government's nine years in power.

Chinese and Australian trade ministers on Monday had their first meeting in more than three years in a major step toward normalizing relations.

Official and unofficial trade barriers on Australian products including coal, beef, seafood, barley and wood cost Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars ($14 billion) a year. The barriers are largely seen as Beijing punishing the previous government for disagreements including Australian demands for an independent inquiry into the origins of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some say New Zealand has avoided such trade retaliation by avoiding criticizing China.

New Zealand found itself on the defensive with its Five Eyes security allies—United States, Canada, Britain and Australia—in 2021 by resisting speaking out in unison with them against China on certain human rights issues.

The New Zealand and Australian prime ministers' talks Tuesday covered their economies, security and climate change. Both countries are also attempting to improve engagement with their South Pacific island neighbors to counter China's growing influence in the region.

China made some bold geopolitical moves in 2022 in the Pacific, first by signing a security pact with the Solomon Islands and then attempting—unsuccessfully—to get 10 Pacific nations to sign a sweeping agreement covering everything from security to fisheries.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Crews release toxic chemicals from derailed tankers in Ohio

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP)—Crews released toxic chemicals into the air from five derailed tanker cars that were in danger of exploding Monday and began burning it after warning residents near the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line to leave immediately or face the possibility of death. Flames and black smoke billowed high into the sky from the derailment site late in the afternoon, about an hour after authorities said the controlled release would begin. The slow release of vinyl chloride from five rail cars into a trough that was then ignited created a large plume above the village of East Palestine but authorities said they were closely monitoring the air quality. "Thus far, no concerning readings have been detected," Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro said at a brief evening news conference about three hours after the venting and burning procedure began. However, he urged Pennsylvania residents within a 2-mile (3.2 kilometer) radius of the derailment site to shelter in place and keep their doors and windows closed through the evening as a precaution in case of wind shifts. Shapiro also said he had spoken to President Joe Biden, who had offered "the full support of the federal government" to Pennsylvania and Ohio. Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine earlier ordered evacuations in the area of the derailment that has been smoldering since Friday night. Authorities believed most, if not all, residents in the danger zone had left but they were knocking on doors one more time before releasing the vinyl chloride inside the cars, he said. "You need to leave, you just need to leave. This is a matter of life and death," DeWine said at a news conference. Officials warned the controlled burn would send phosgene and hydrogen chloride into the air. Phosgene is a highly toxic gas that can cause vomiting and breathing trouble and was used as a weapon in World War I.

Boeing plans to cut about 2,000 finance and HR jobs in 2023

SEATTLE (AP)—Boeing plans to make staffing cuts in the aerospace company's finance and human resources departments in 2023, with a loss of around 2,000 jobs, the company said. "We expect about 2,000 reductions primarily in Finance and HR through a combination of attrition and layoffs," Boeing said in a statement Monday. "While no one has been notified of job loss, we will continue to share information transparently to allow people to plan." The company, which recently relocated its headquarters to Arlington, Virginia, said it expects to "significantly grow" the overall workforce during the year. "We grew Boeing's workforce by 15,000 last year and plan to hire another 10,000 employees this year with a focus on engineering and manufacturing," the statement said. Boeing's total workforce was 156,000 employees as of Dec. 31, 2022, the company said. The Seattle Times reported Boeing, which has been one of the largest private employers in Washington state, plans to outsource about a third of the eliminated positions to Tata Consulting Services in Bengaluru, India. Mike Friedman, a senior director of communications, told the Times the other positions will be eliminated as the company makes reductions in finance and human resources support services. "Over time, some of our corporate functions have grown quite large. And with that growth tends to come bureaucracy or disparate systems that are inefficient," Friedman said. "So we're streamlining." The Times reported about 1,500 of the company's approximately 5,800 finance positions will be cut, with up to 400 more job cuts in human resources, which is about 15% of the department's total staff.

Nation

Biden aims to deliver reassurance in State of Union address

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden is ready to offer a reassuring assessment of the nation's condition rather than roll out flashy policy proposals as he delivers his second State of the Union address seeking to overcome pessimism in the country and concerns about his own leadership.

His speech before a politically divided Congress comes Tuesday night as the nation struggles to make sense of confounding cross-currents at home and abroad—economic uncertainty, a wearying war in Ukraine, growing tensions with China among them—and warily sizes up Biden's fitness for a likely reelection bid.

The president will stand at the House rostrum at a time when just a quarter of U.S. adults say things in the country are headed in the right direction, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. About three-quarters say things are on the wrong track. And a majority of Democrats don't want Biden to seek another term.

Biden will aim to confront those sentiments head on, aides said, while at the same time trying to avoid sounding insensitive to Americans' concerns.

Brian Deese, director of the National Economic Council, said Biden would "acknowledge and meet American people where they are," adding that their "economic anxiety is real."

"I think the core message is: We have to make more progress, but people should feel optimism," he added.

Chapman University presidential historian Luke Nichter said the closest parallel to Biden's present circumstance may be the 1960s, when global uncertainty met domestic disquiet. Biden, he said, has an opportunity to be a "calming presence" for the country.

"Usually we're looking for an agenda: 'Here's what he plans to do.' I don't know that that's really realistic," Nichter said. "I think Americans' expectations are pretty low of what Congress is actually going to achieve. And so I think right now, sentiment and tone, and helping Americans feel better about their circumstances, I think are going to go a long way."

AP

President Joe Biden delivers his first State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress at the Capitol, March 1, 2022, in Washington.

The setting for Biden's speech will be markedly different than a year ago, when it was Democratic stalwart Nancy Pelosi seated behind him as speaker. She's been replaced by GOP House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, and it's unclear what kind of reception restive Republican will give the Democratic president.

With COVID-19 restrictions now lifted, the White House and legislators from both parties are inviting guests designed to drive home political messages with their presence in the House chamber. The parents of Tyre Nichols, who was severely beaten by police officers in Memphis and later died, are among those expected to be in the audience.

Biden is shifting his sights after spending his first two years pushing through major bills such as the bipartisan infrastructure package, a bill to promote high-tech manufacturing and climate legislations. With Republicans now in control of the House, Biden is turning his focus to implementing the massive laws and making sure voters credit him for the improvements rather than crafting major new initiatives.

It's largely by necessity. Biden faces a newly empowered GOP that is itching to undo many of his achievements and vowing to pursue a multitude of investigations—including looking into the recent discoveries of classified documents from his time as vice president at his home and former office.

At the same time, Biden will need to find a way to work across the aisle to raise the federal debt limit by this summer and keep the government funded. Biden has insisted that he won't negotiate on meeting the country's debt obligations; Republicans have been equally adamant that Biden must make spending concessions.

One the eve of the president's address, McCarthy challenged Biden to come to the negotiating table with House Republicans to slash spending as part of a deal to raise the debt ceiling.

"Mr. President, it's time to get to work," McCarthy said in remarks from the speaker's balcony at the Capitol.

'Deadly brew': Amid soaring crime, Memphis cops lowered bar

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Beyond the beating, kicking, cursing and pepper spraying, the video of Tyre Nichols' deadly arrest at the hands of young Memphis police officers is just as notable for what's missing—any experienced supervisors showing up to stop them.

That points to a dangerous confluence of trends that Memphis' police chief acknowledged have dogged the department as the city became one of the nation's murder hotspots: a chronic shortage of officers, especially supervisors, increasing numbers of police quitting and a struggle to bring in qualified recruits.

Former Memphis police recruiters told The Associated Press of a growing desperation to fill hundreds of slots in recent years that drove the department to increase incentives and lower its standards.

"They would allow just pretty much anybody to be a police officer because they just want these numbers," said Alvin Davis, a former lieutenant in charge of recruiting before he retired last year out of frustration. "They're not ready for it."

The department offered new recruits $15,000 signing bonuses and $10,000 relocation allowances while phasing out requirements to have either college credits, military service or previous police work. All that's now required is two years' work experience—any work experience. The department also sought state waivers to hire applicants with criminal records. And the police academy even dropped timing requirements on physical fitness drills and removed running entirely because too many people were failing.

"I asked them what made you want to be the police and they'll be honest—they'll tell you it's strictly about the money," Davis said, adding that many recruits would ask the minimum time they would actually have to serve to keep the bonus money. "It's not a career for them like it was to us. It's just a job."

Another former patrol officer-turned-recruiter who recently left the department told the AP that in addition to drawing from other law enforcement agencies and college campuses, recruits were increasingly coming from jobs at the McDonald's and Dunkin' drive-thrus.

In one case, a stripper submitted an application. And even though she didn't get hired, it reinforced the message that "anyone can get this job. You could have any type of experience and be the police."

"There were red flags," said the former recruiter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel and hiring. "But we're so far down the pyramid nobody really hears the little person."

Many young officers, before ever walking a beat with more experienced colleagues, found themselves thrust into specialized units like the now-disbanded SCORPION high-crime strike force involved in Nichols' arrest. Their lack of experience was shocking to veterans, who said some young officers who transfer back to patrol don't even know how to write a traffic ticket or respond to a domestic call.

"They don't know a felony from a misdemeanor," Davis said. "They don't even know right from wrong yet."

Memphis police did not respond to requests for comment about their hiring standards.

Of the five SCORPION team officers now charged with second-degree murder in Nichols' Jan. 7 beating, two had only a couple of years on the force and none had more than six years' experience.

One of the officers, Emmitt Martin III, 30, a former tight end on the Bethel University football team, appeared to have had at least one arrest, according to files from the Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, a state oversight agency. But the date and details of the case were blacked out.

The section for arrests in the agency's file for another officer, Demetrius Haley, 30, who worked at a Shelby County Corrections facility before joining the force, was also redacted from the state records. Haley was sued for allegedly beating an inmate there, which he denied, and the case was dismissed because papers had not been properly served.

White House: Improved surveillance caught Chinese balloon

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. officials said Monday that improvements ordered by President Joe Biden to strengthen defenses against Chinese espionage helped to identify last week's spy balloon—and to determine that similar flights were conducted at multiple points during the Trump administration.

White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that after Biden took office, the U.S. "enhanced our surveillance of our territorial airspace, we enhanced our capacity to be able to detect things that the Trump administration was unable to detect."

Biden, in turn, has been faulted by some Republicans for not ordering the balloon shot down before it made its way across the U.S. Officials have said there was concern about damage to people on the ground, and Biden addressed the issue on Monday.

"Once it came over to the United States, from Canada, I told the Defense Department I wanted to shoot it down as soon as it was appropriate," Biden said. The military concluded "we should not shoot it down over land, it was not a serious threat."

In a brief exchange with reporters, Biden expressed his continued displeasure with Beijing. Asked why China launched the balloon over the U.S., he replied simply, "Because they're the Chinese."

Biden administration officials have planned a classified briefing for all senators on Thursday to discuss the spy balloon situation, according to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's office.

Sullivan, speaking at an event hosted by the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, said as part of the surveillance improvements since Biden took office, "we were able to go back and look at the historical patterns" and uncover "multiple instances" during the Trump administration in which Chinese surveillance balloons traversed American airspace and territory.

Several Trump administration officials have have said they didn't learn of Chinese spy balloons during their tenures.

Before Monday, U.S. officials had said that at least three times during the Trump administration and at least one other time during Biden's time as president balloons have crossed American airspace, but not for this long. In those instances, the United States determined the balloons belonged to China only after they had left U.S. airspace, said Gen. Glen VanHerck, head of U.S. Northern Command.

"I will tell you that we did not detect those threats," VanHerck said of his military command. "And that's a domain awareness gap that we have to figure out." He added that the U.S. intelligence community "after the fact" informed his command about the balloons.

Asia

China accuses US of indiscriminate use of force over balloon shooting

AP

Business owner "Annie" weights down copies of the Chinese Daily News newspaper showcasing pictures of a suspected Chinese spy balloon, in the Chinatown district of Los Angeles Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023.

BEIJING (AP)—China on Monday accused the United States of indiscriminate use of force in shooting down a suspected Chinese spy balloon, saying it "seriously impacted and damaged both sides' efforts and progress in stabilizing Sino-U.S. relations."

The U.S. shot down the balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America. China insisted the flyover was an accident involving a civilian aircraft.

Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng said he lodged a formal complaint with the U.S. Embassy on Sunday over the "U.S. attack on a Chinese civilian unmanned airship by military force."

"However, the United States turned a deaf ear and insisted on indiscriminate use of force against the civilian airship that was about to leave the United States airspace, obviously overreacted and seriously violated the spirit of international law and international practice," Xie said.

The presence of the balloon in the skies above the U.S. dealt a severe blow to already strained U.S.-Chinese relations that have been in a downward spiral for years. It prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes Beijing trip aimed at easing tensions.

Xie repeated China's insistence that the balloon was a Chinese civil unmanned airship that blew into U.S. airspace by mistake, calling it "an accidental incident caused by force majeure."

China will "resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, resolutely safeguard China's interests and dignity and reserve the right to make further necessary responses," he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden issued the shootdown order after he was advised that the best time for the operation would be when it was over water, U.S. officials said. Military officials determined that bringing down the balloon over land from an altitude of 60,000 feet (18,000 meters) would pose an undue risk to people on the ground.

N. Korean leader orders military to improve war readiness

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered his military to expand its combat exercises and strengthen war preparedness as he looks to escalate an already provocative run in weapons demonstrations in the face of deepening tensions with its neighbors and Washington.

Kim presided over a meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission on Monday and encouraged the armed forces to perform "ever-victorious feats" and display "matchless military strength" to open a new phase in development, the country's official Korean Central News Agency reported Tuesday.

The meeting came amid signs North Korea is planning a military parade that may be an occasion to showcase the latest hardware from his growing nuclear weapons and missile program that's brewing concern for the United States and its allies in Asia.

The commission's members, who represent Kim's top military brass, discussed a series of tasks aimed at inducing "great change" in the military, including "constantly expanding and intensifying the operation and combat drills" and "more strictly perfecting the preparedness for war," the agency said.

The commission also discussed unspecified organizational changes to "fundamentally improve and strengthen" military affairs, and state media photos of the meeting showed a flag representing a possibly new department called the "missile general bureau."

North Korea marks the 75th founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army on Wednesday and may celebrate with a parade in Pyongyang.

Lee Sung-jun, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that the South Korean military has detected a "significant increase in personnel and vehicles" in areas related to parade rehearsals, but declined to share a specific assessment on when the event would take place.

Lee said the South Korean military was closely monitoring developments related to North Korea's possible creation of a new military bureau related to missiles, but didn't provide further details. Some analysts say that the new department could possibly handle the development of nuclear warheads and ballistic systems.

Kim's comments from the military meeting are the latest warning from Pyongyang that it's preparing to intensify its military demonstrations following a record-breaking year in missile testing. The warnings are in part a response to the United States' expanding military drills with South Korea, which the allies have said are aimed at countering the North's evolving threat.

World

Aid, rescuers rushed to Turkey and Syria after deadly quake

Many governments and aid groups have rushed to dispatch personnel, funds and equipment to help the rescue efforts in quake-stricken areas of Turkey and Syria. Here's a glance at what's being provided so far:

—The European Union has mobilized search and rescue teams to help Turkey, while the 27-nation bloc's Copernicus satellite system has been activated to provide emergency mapping services. At least 13 member countries have offered assistance. The EU said it's also ready to offer help to Syria through its humanitarian assistance programs.

—The United States is coordinating immediate assistance to NATO-member Turkey, including teams to support search and rescue efforts. U.S.-supported humanitarian partners are also responding to the destruction in Syria. In California, nearly 100 Los Angeles County firefighters and structural engineers, along with a half-dozen specially trained dogs, were being sent to Turkey to help with rescue efforts.

—Russian rescue teams from the Emergencies Ministry are preparing to fly to Syria, where Russian military deployed in that country already has sent 10 units comprising 300 people to help clear debris and search for survivors. The Russian military has set up points to distribute humanitarian assistance. Russia also has offered help to Turkey, which has been accepted.

—War-ravaged Syria is calling on the United Nations and all member states to help with rescue efforts, health services, shelter and food aid. The affected area in Syria is divided between government-held territory and the country's last opposition-held enclave.

—The Israeli army says it's sending a search and rescue team of 150 engineers, medical personnel and other aid workers to Turkey. The army said they would provide "immediate assistance in life-saving efforts." The two countries, once close regional allies, are in the process of mending ties after years of tensions. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he has also approved a request for humanitarian aid for Syria, received through a diplomatic official. Israel and Syria do not have diplomatic relations and the two countries have fought several wars.

— Neighbor and historic regional rival Greece is sending Turkey a team of 21 rescuers, two rescue dogs and a special rescue vehicle, together with a structural engineer, five doctors and seismic planning experts in a military transport plane.

—Germany's Foreign Ministry said it is coordinating its aid response with EU partners and readying deliveries of emergency generators, tents, blankets and water treatment equipment. It also has offered to send teams from the THW civil protection agency to Turkey to help with the response. The group International Search and Rescue Germany was also preparing to fly dozens of doctors and rescue experts to Turkey late Monday.

—South Korea says it will dispatch a 60-person search and rescue team and also send medical supplies to Turkey. The regional government of Gyeonggi Province, near the capital Seoul, said it plans to provide $1 million in humanitarian assistance to Turkey to support rescue efforts and the medical response. Announcing the plan, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol described Turkey as a "brother nation" that swiftly sent troops to fight alongside South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War.

—Britain is sending 76 search-and-rescue specialists with equipment and dogs, as well as an emergency medical team, to Turkey. The U.K. also says it's in contact with the U.N. about getting support to victims in Syria. ***(AP)***

Russian forces keep up pressure as Ukraine anniversary nears

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russian forces are keeping Ukrainian troops tied down with attacks in the eastern Donbas region as Moscow assembles additional combat power there for an expected offensive in the coming weeks, Ukrainian officials said Monday.

Intense fighting that has been raging for weeks continued around the city of Bakhmut and the nearby towns of Soledar and Vuhledar, Ukraine's presidential office said.

They are located in the Donetsk region, which with neighboring Luhansk region makes up the Donbas, an industrial area bordering Russia.

"The battles for the region are heating up," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in televised remarks, adding that "the Russians are throwing new units into the battle and eradicating our towns and villages."

In Luhansk, Gov. Serhii Haidai said shelling there had subsided because "the Russians have been saving ammunition for a large-scale offensive."

Military analysts say the Kremlin's forces may be probing Ukrainian defenses for weak points or could be making a feint while preparing for a main thrust through southern Ukraine.

Ukraine envisages possible Russian offensives in the east and the south, Ukrainian military intelligence spokesman Vadym Skibitsky said. He predicted that Russia will likely press its offensive in the Donbas and could also launch an attack in the southern Zaporizhzhia region.

He didn't say when the offensive might start but noted that the Russian military would need another couple of months to complete the training of new units.

Skibitsky added that Russia plans to mobilize another 300,000-500,000 in addition to the 300,000 mobilized in the fall.

David Arakhamia, who leads Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party in parliament, said Sunday that Ukraine is preparing for a Russian offensive while planning to counterattack and reclaim its occupied territory.

Arakhamia, noting that "time and circumstances call for strengthening and regrouping," also announced that Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov would be moved to another government post and replaced by the head of military intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov. But Arakhamia abruptly changed course Monday and said that no shakeup will happen this week.

Mariana Bezuhla, a Servant of the People party lawmaker, said officials decided to postpone the reshuffle following the analysis of "risks for the system as a whole" ahead of next week's meeting with NATO allies.

One of Reznikov's deputies recently lost his job amid Zelenskyy's crackdown on corruption. Reznikov said over the weekend that he was ready to step down if Zelenskyy decides it is best.

Good Housekeeping

Top 10 trends spotted at Design & Construction Week 2023

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Each year architects, designers, builders and design enthusiasts gather in Las Vegas for Design & Construction Week, a prominent industry event. It's comprised of the National Kitchen & Bath Association's Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, National Association of Home Builders' International Builders' Show and more.

This year a number of trends are consistent and appear to be here to stay, while some new ones seem to have emerged.

Here's our take on the top 10 2023 design trends as seen at Design & Construction Week, which took place Jan. 31-Feb. 2.

A black sideboard with a textured front and contrast wood trim as seen at Design & Construction Week 2023 in Las Vegas. HANDOUT/TNS

1 Round and chunky
From sofas to side tables and even lighting, round edges dominate over hard lines.

2 Brass and gold
The most popular finishes remain brass and gold, from kitchen appliance knobs to bathroom faucets and lighting.

3 Bright pops of color
While neutral palettes dominate, we spotted creative use of color from appliances to furniture and accessories.

4 Inlay
There seems to be a trend toward a bit of embellishment, from small inlay on items such as desks to kitchen cabinet trim.

5 Texture
In the home furnishings category, when it comes to pillows and area rugs, we spotted a lot of texture. Relating to case goods and cabinetry in the kitchen and bath, elements such as ribbing and knurled hardware remain popular.

6 Smart technology and sustainability
The push toward sustainable materials is gaining momentum in the area of home decor and building materials as well as smart technology.

Retro style side chairs as seen at Design & Construction Week 2023 in Las Vegas. HANDOUT/TNS

A green-colored oven displayed with gold knobs seemed to be part of a color trend at the recent National Kitchen & Bath Association's Kitchen and Bath Industry Show and National Association of Home Builders' International Builders' Show. HANDOUT/TNS

Artwork with a bright, graphic print as seen at Design & Construction Week 2023 in Las Vegas. HANDOUT/TNS

7 Lighting for both aesthetic and functionality
We spotted a lot of lighting with architectural elements that went beyond functionality to make a design statement within a space.

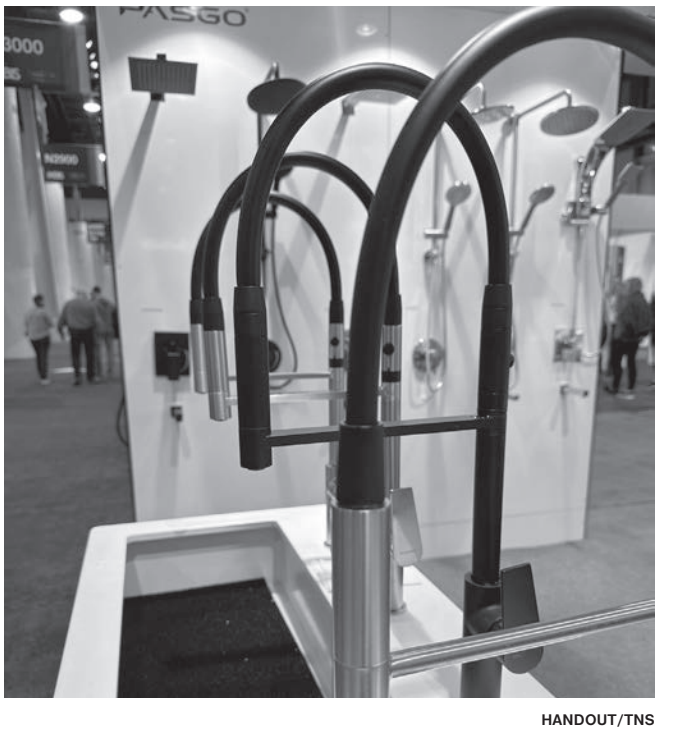
8 Retro
In the area of home decor, style reminiscent of the '70s is in vogue.

9 Midcentury modern
Midcentury modern seems to be the new classic. It appears to be a timeless trend that can lend itself to various styles and aesthetics.

10 Black and gold
We spotted the color combination repeatedly, especially in the kitchen, bath and hardware categories. The mix of brass and black is a prevalent color combination.

An oven in a bright yellow finish earned a 2023 National Kitchen & Bath Association's Kitchen and Bath Industry Show finalist designation. HANDOUT/TNS

A writing desk with gold inlay/trim as seen at Design & Construction Week 2023 in Las Vegas. HANDOUT/TNS

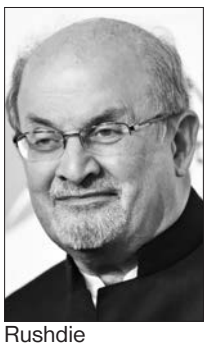


HANDOUT/TNS
A black and gold faucet as shown at the 2023 National Kitchen & Bath Association's Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas.

Life & Style

Salman Rushdie gives first interview since 2022 stabbing

NEW YORK (AP)—Months after being stabbed repeatedly as he prepared to give a lecture, Salman Rushdie is blind in his right eye, struggles to write and, at times, has "frightening" nightmares.


Rushdie

But, he said during his first interview since the attack, he still has a feeling of gratitude.

"Well, you know, I've been better," he told The New Yorker's David Remnick during an interview published Monday. "But, considering what happened, I'm not so bad."

"The big injuries are healed, essentially," Rushdie went on to describe. "I have feeling in my thumb and index finger and in the bottom half of the palm. I'm doing a lot of hand therapy, and I'm told that I'm doing very well."

Remnick, who spoke with Rushdie both in person at his agent's office in Manhattan and via Zoom, wrote that the Booker Prize-winning author had lost more than 40 pounds (18 kilograms) and mostly reads through an iPad so he can adjust the lighting and font size.

"There is scar tissue on the right side of his face," Remnick wrote. "He speaks as fluently as ever, but his lower lip droops on one side. The ulnar nerve in his left hand was badly damaged."

Rushdie, 75, lived in hiding for years after Iran's Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa in 1989 calling for his death because of the alleged blasphemy of the novel "The Satanic Verses." But he had long since moved about freely, with minimal security, and did not feel any sense of risk last August about appearing at the Chautauqua Institution, a nonprofit education and retreat center in western New York.

Rushdie was on stage when approached by a young man dressed in black and carrying a knife. The alleged assailant, Hadi Matar, has pleaded not guilty to charges of assault and attempted murder. During his New Yorker interview, Rushdie referred to Matar as an "idiot," but otherwise said he felt no anger.

"I've tried very hard over these years to avoid recrimination and bitterness," he said. "I just think it's not a good look. One of the ways I've dealt with this whole thing is to look forward and not backwards. What happens tomorrow is more important than what happened yesterday."

'Dances With Wolves' actor charged in Nevada sex abuse case

NORTH LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP)—A former "Dances With Wolves" actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous girls and women for two decades in multiple states has been charged in Nevada for crimes that prosecutors said occurred in the Las Vegas-area starting in 2012.

Nathan Chasing Horse, 46, was formally charged Monday morning during a brief appearance in a North Las Vegas courtroom full of his friends and relatives who had hoped to see him released on bail. But a judge postponed hearing arguments about his custody status until Wednesday to give Chasing Horse's new California-based attorney, Alexandra Kazaria, additional time to obtain permission from the State Bar of Nevada to represent him in the case.

Chasing Horse

Nevada law requires prosecutors to present convincing evidence that a defendant should remain in custody. Clark County Deputy District Attorney Jessica Walsh said last week that she expected testimony from Las Vegas police detectives, FBI special agents and victims.

In the meantime, Chasing Horse is being held without bail at a jail in downtown Las Vegas. He has been in custody since his Jan. 31 arrest near the North Las Vegas home he shares with his five wives.

Chasing Horse is charged with eight felonies, including sex trafficking, sexual assault against a child younger than 16, and child abuse, according to a criminal complaint. Prosecutors also filed an additional felony charge Monday in connection with what detectives said were videos saved on a phone showing sexual assaults of a minor.

Seated opposite of Chasing Horse's family on Monday, some of the victims and their supporters held signs inside the courtroom reading "NO MORE STOLEN SISTERS" and "WOMEN AREN'T PRISONERS."

Rulon Pete, executive director of the Las Vegas Indian Center, said after the hearing that the victims had been prepared "to help out with making sure justice has been served."

Former Rep. Tulsi Gabbard writing book on leaving Democrats

NEW YORK (AP)—Tulsi Gabbard, the former Democratic representative from Hawaii who clashed often with her party and eventually left it, has a memoir coming out Oct. 10.

Gabbard's memoir, currently untitled, is the first of a two-book deal with Regnery Publishing, the longtime conservative publisher. Regnery is calling the book the "full story of her electrifying break" with the Democrats. Gabbard served in the House of Representatives from 2013-2021, and over time would become a prominent critic of party leadership, including on its support for Ukraine against the Russians. Gabbard once called Hillary Clinton the "embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long." She endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders' run against Clinton for the 2016 presidential party nomination and briefly ran herself for the 2020 election before dropping out and backing the eventual winner, Joe Biden.

Gabbard

In recent years, she was a frequent guest on the Fox network and is now a paid contributor. Last October, she left the Democrats, saying they were dominated by an "elitist cabal of warmongers" and "woke Democratic Party ideologues," and supported numerous Republican candidates in the fall's elections.

"This book will share my experiences at the highest level of Democratic politics, and why I can no longer call myself a Democrat," Gabbard, 41, said in a statement Monday. "Today's Democratic Party is unrecognizable from the party I joined 20 years ago."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Grammys rebound from COVID years, reach 12.4 million viewers

NEW YORK (AP)—An estimated 12.4 million people tuned in to watch stars Harry Styles, Lizzo and Bad Bunny perform at the Grammy Awards, along with a tribute to 50 years of rap history. That's up from the pandemic-affected broadcasts of the last two years, the Nielsen company said on Monday. Live viewership was 8.8 million in 2021 and 8.9 million in 2022. While the Grammys bounced back, it didn't reach the viewership levels of pre-COVID days. Music's showcase night was seen by 18.7 million people in 2020. Live television viewership has declined across-the-board over the past few years, with pro football one of the few events to buck the trend.

Julie Andrews teams with daughter on new picture book

NEW YORK (AP)—The latest picture book collaboration between Julie Andrews and daughter Emma Walton Hamilton was inspired by an unusual musical performance in Spain. Abrams Children's Books announced Monday that "The Enchanted Symphony" will be published Sept. 12. Andrews and Walton Hamilton thought of the book during the first year of the pandemic, when they learned of "Concert for the Biocene," in which a string quartet played in front of thousands—of plants, one for each seat at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu. "The Enchanted Symphony" is a "hopeful fairy tale," according to Abrams. It's set in a village "beset by a mysterious fog," but revived by a "boy's simple melody."

Revealing of newborn's name triggers emotional reaction

DEAR ABBY: I recently gave birth to our second child, a girl. Shortly afterward, my husband called his mother. She lives in a different state hours away and visits only once a year. When he told her the happy news and our little girl's name, which we had kept a secret, she became very upset. It seems the name we had chosen, unbeknownst to us, was that of her husband's mistress from years ago.

For days afterward, she would call my husband crying and pleading with him to change our baby's name, telling him he should never have kept it a secret. She told him she would never speak that name. A week later, we received a generous gift of baby clothes in the mail from her. At this point, she hasn't checked in with me, the one who gave birth. She refuses to acknowledge our baby's name and will refer to her only as "little one."

I don't know how to thank her for her generous gift, as normally I would just call her. But it's clear she doesn't want to hear from me. Could you please advise how we move forward?

WRONG NAME IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR WRONG NAME: It was unfortunate that the name you (and your husband, I presume) chose for your daughter was the same as the woman your father-in-law cheated with. If your mother-in-law's solution to the problem is to refer to her granddaughter as "little one," accept it. It seems very loving, actually. And when you write her a lovely thank-you note for her generous gift, sign it, "With love from (your name) and "Little One," which I think is a sweet nickname.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am a happily married gay man in my 50s. About a year ago, I was contacted on Facebook Messenger by a man in another state, and we have developed what I consider a casual friendship. My new friend has cerebral palsy and is in a wheelchair. He lives with family and requires total care for his mobility and self-care. He has normal cognition, from what I can tell.

I can only imagine how difficult it would be to develop friendships and relationships with a severe disability. I have an active social life and chat here and there with him nearly every day, but I know I'm a much bigger part of his life than he is of mine. He refers to me as his best friend and says he needs his time with me. He doesn't harass me and is always respectful. He is gay, but closeted, and he knows I'm married.

It is apparent that he is very lonely. I don't want to lead him on, but I know this relationship is very unbalanced. Is it OK for me to keep casually texting, saying hello and asking about his day? I feel like I'm his only friend.

UNCERTAIN IN TENNESSEE

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR UNCERTAIN: It would be a kindness to continue casually texting, saying hello and asking this extremely isolated individual about his day. But while you are at it, it would ALSO be a kindness to encourage him to open his world and widen his circle of friends by going on the internet and talking to people with similar interests.

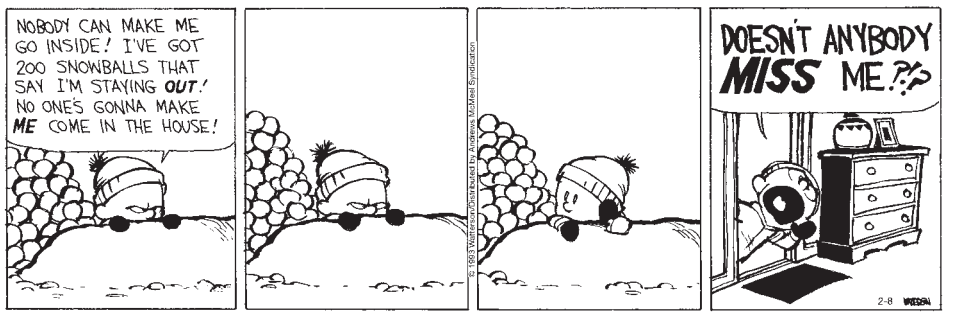
■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


NOBODY CAN MAKE ME GO INSIDE! I'VE GOT 200 SNOWBALLS THAT SAY I'M STAYING OUT! NO ONE'S GONNA MAKE ME COME IN THE HOUSE!
DOESN'T ANYBODY MISS ME?!?
2-8

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM CONTAINS STRONG LANGUAGE
MEEOWWW! MEOWR!
BARK! BARK! ARF! GRR!
MEOWRR!
GRRWL!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY LET THAT ON TV!
JIM DAVIS 2-8
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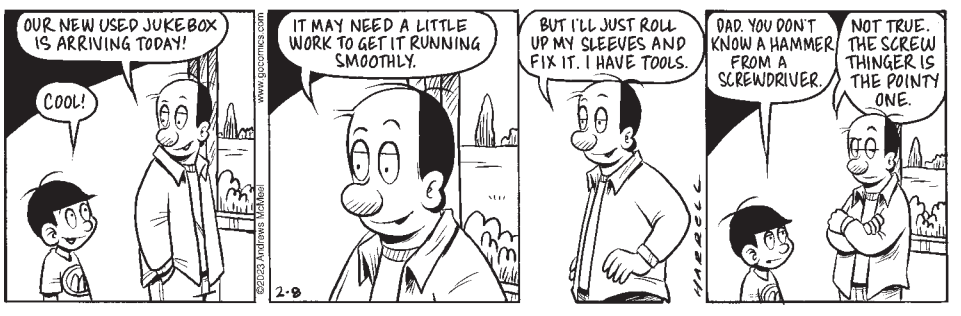
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


OUR NEW USED JUKE BOX IS ARRIVING TODAY!
COOL!
IT MAY NEED A LITTLE WORK TO GET IT RUNNING SMOOTHLY.
BUT I'LL JUST ROLL UP MY SLEEVES AND FIX IT. I HAVE TOOLS.
DAD. YOU DON'T KNOW A HAMMER FROM A SCREWDRIVER.
NOT TRUE. THE SCREW THINGER IS THE POINTY ONE.
2-8
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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

PLEASE BLESS GINA, AND MITZI, AND ELVIN...
AND EVEN THOUGH I'M MAD AT ENO, GO AHEAD AND BLESS HIM TOO.
BUT DON'T GO OUT OF YOUR WAY IF YOU'RE BUSY.
1-8
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Rapscallions
5 — alai
8 Wild guess
12 Shopper's dream
13 Author Fleming
14 Columbus' home
15 Classic Billy Joel hit
17 Antitoxins
18 More cagey
19 Smoothing undergarment
21 Ancient Brit
24 1501, in old Rome
25 Former larva
28 Twistable treat
30 Woodshaping tool
33 Blackbird
34 Diarist Nin
35 Actress Long
36 Goat's plaint
37 Israel's Golda
38 Sound from Big Ben
39 "The Matrix" character
41 Rip
43 "Quantum Healing" author Deepak
46 Showy parrot
50 Vagabond
51 Kid's keyboard
54 "If — a Hammer"
55 World Cup cheer
56 Sketched
57 Apple center
58 Rx writers
59 Scatters seeds

DOWN

1 AOL and MSN
2 Postal delivery
3 Stage show
4 New York tribe
5 Huck's raftmate
6 Bond rating
7 Hostels
8 "What a pity!"
9 1993 Holly Hunter film
10 Suffix for billion
11 Wild hog
16 Miner's quest
20 Med. plan options
22 Unrivaled
23 Characteristic
25 Grier of "The L Word"
26 Italian article
27 Venue for cocktails and music
29 Green land
31 Cacophony
32 Abrupt turn
34 Roman god of love
38 Plaits
40 Lyric poem
42 Pump up the volume
43 Stylish
44 Jolly laugh
45 Teensy bit
47 LBJ biographer Robert
48 Fresh
49 Amazes
52 Vintage
53 Thumbs-up

Solution time: 23 mins.

D	R	I	P	■	P	A	M	■	W	A	L	T
A	N	N	A	■	O	U	I	■	A	M	O	R
L	A	D	Y	B	U	G	S	■	R	E	P	O
■	■	■	S	I	R	■	R	A	M	S	E	Y
F	R	A	U	D	■	N	E	A	T	■	■	■
A	A	R	P	■	B	E	A	R	H	U	G	S
T	S	E	■	S	L	I	D	E	■	R	A	H
S	H	A	G	R	U	G	S	■	M	A	L	E
■	■	■	R	O	S	H	■	T	A	L	L	S
M	O	D	E	S	T	■	A	S	P	■	■	■
O	K	R	A	■	E	A	R	P	L	U	G	S
L	A	O	S	■	R	B	I	■	E	S	A	U
T	Y	P	E	■	Y	E	A	■	S	A	M	E

Yesterday's answer 2-8

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				16				■	17			
18					■	■	19	20				
■	■	■	21		22	23	■	24			■	■
25	26	27		■	28		29		■	30	31	32
33			■	34					■	35		
36			■	37				■	38			
■	■	39	40		■	41		42		■	■	■
43	44				45	■	■	46		47	48	49
50				■	51	52	53					
54				■	55			■	56			
57				■	58			■	59			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Quintessa Swindell, 26; Seth Green, 49; Mary Steenburgen, 70; Nick Nolte, 82.

Happy Birthday: Keeping track of money matters is essential. Spending unnecessarily or letting someone take advantage of you financially will result in an emotional drama. Rigid rules are required to ward off poor judgment regarding shared expenses or partnerships. Don't make changes that aren't in your best interest this year. Get along, but don't get used. Your numbers are 3, 12, 19, 25, 32, 44, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Gather information and carefully review every scenario before deciding to move forward. Taking on too much or not fully understanding what others expect of you will cause stress. When in doubt, take a pass. Update and sort through essential papers. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A stubborn attitude won't get you what you want. Be reasonable and offer positive suggestions, and you'll convince others to meet you halfway. Do your part, and you'll get further ahead and make a good impression. Don't lend or borrow money. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Discover more before participating in a joint venture. Ask questions and be frank about what you are willing to contribute. If you give someone the impression that you are a pushover, someone will take advantage of you. ✪✪

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Follow your heart and do what comes naturally. Don't make excuses; be honest and direct to avoid being compromised by someone demanding. Love is in the air, and a passionate gesture will not go unnoticed. A lifestyle change looks inviting. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If not handled properly, money matters will lead to situations that affect your emotional well-being. Start a physical activity that will help ease stress and get you back on track. A change of attitude will encourage stability. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Evaluate your meaningful relationships. Reflect on how you can do things differently or change your course to make your life and surroundings less cluttered, more emotionally gratifying and less stressful. Choose love over discord; the response you receive will encourage romance. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Refresh your plans and put the time and effort into getting things up and running. Doing the work will be self-satisfying and lead to bigger and brighter opportunities. Put your energy where it counts, and success will be yours. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): If you look, you will find something that sparks your imagination and sends you on a hunt for something new and exciting. Don't limit what you can do because someone else is emotionally manipulative. Take control and take responsibility for your happiness. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Getting along with others will be tricky. Evasive communication will take over, leaving you and those you deal with confused and wondering what to do next. Leave nothing to chance, take notes and when in doubt, ask a question. Honesty is the best policy. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Keep the momentum flowing. Spend less, do more and bring about change that will improve your domestic life and lower your overhead. A home improvement that cuts costs will pay for itself in no time. Love and romance are encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't stop, regardless of what everyone around you is doing. A relationship will change, but don't dismay. In the end, it will be to your benefit. Don't hide your true feelings; clear the air and get on with your life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Be realistic regarding expectations. Sign up for what you know you can handle, nothing more. Exhaustion or injury will slow you down if you don't get enough rest or try to do something physical with a risk factor involved. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are adventuresome, inventive and contributive. You are courageous and endearing.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5				3		4	2	1
1			7					
							6	
	8				2	5		
6	5				3		4	
		4		7	6			3
9	3			1				
		5		8		2		4
							8	

Difficulty: ★★★ 2-8

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	7	3	6	8	5	2	1	9
9	2	1	7	3	4	6	8	5
5	6	8	2	1	9	7	3	4
7	3	4	8	5	6	1	9	2
2	1	9	3	4	7	8	5	6
6	8	5	1	9	2	3	4	7
3	4	7	5	6	8	9	2	1
1	9	2	4	7	3	5	6	8
8	5	6	9	2	1	4	7	3

Difficulty: ★★ 2-7

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

IT'S OBSIDIAN Solution: 7 letters

T	N	E	C	U	L	S	N	A	R	T	O	O	L	S
V	O	L	C	A	N	I	C	M	A	G	M	A	S	H
R	I	A	B	O	U	L	D	E	R	B	S	E	E	A
E	T	R	R	C	O	A	S	T	R	N	E	A	S	D
F	A	U	O	A	S	O	H	A	E	Ⓜ	S	R	S	E
L	R	T	N	E	R	C	C	L	A	Ⓤ	T	R	A	S
E	O	A	Z	C	U	E	T	R	N	Ⓖ	E	I	L	K
C	C	N	E	O	L	T	F	I	Y	N	E	N	G	N
T	E	E	T	E	I	E	A	M	O	S	L	G	N	I
N	D	V	T	R	R	T	I	T	R	E	T	S	U	L
A	A	R	B	U	N	N	S	A	S	P	L	A	S	F
D	R	A	T	U	E	M	I	R	R	O	R	P	L	F
N	K	C	O	R	E	E	L	E	S	A	V	A	L	U
E	I	M	A	G	N	E	S	I	U	M	R	A	H	C
P	O	L	I	S	H	E	D	E	C	A	F	R	U	S

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Boulder, Bracelet, Brittle, Bronze, Carve, Charm, Coal, Coast, Crystal, Cufflinks, Dark, Decoration, Earrings, Gemstone, Lava, Lens, Luster, Magma, Magnesium, Mineral, Mirror, Mountain, Mug, Natural, Pendant, Picture Frame, Polished, Rare, Reflect, Shades, Sharp, Statue, Steel, Sunglasses, Surface, Tools, Touch, Translucent, Vase, Volcanic

Yesterday's Answer: Vin Santo

The NEW **Volume 70** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Clippers surge late, overcome Thomas' 47 to top Nets, 124-116

AP

Los Angeles Clippers' Nicolas Batum (33) is defended by Brooklyn Nets' Dru Smith (9) and Royce O'Neale (00) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Paul George scored 29 points, Kawhi Leonard added 24 and the Los Angeles Clippers overcame a career-high 47 points from Cam Thomas in his first start to beat the short-handed Brooklyn Nets 124-116 on Monday night.

Ivica Zubac added 19 points and 12 rebounds for the Clippers, who won for the eighth time in 10 games and finished 4-2 on their six-game Eastern Conference road trip.

"I'm happy with the road trip we had," Leonard said. "We came out 4-2, and that's a pretty good road trip for us."

Thomas, who scored 44 to rally the Nets past Washington on Saturday, was even better on the day the Nets completed the trade that sent Kyrie Irving to Dallas. But Los Angeles outscored Brooklyn 25-9 over the final 6:20.

"Their objective (was) to come in and play hard and go hard, and they did that," George said. "I thought it was a good experience for us to get good possessions down the stretch."

Nic Claxton had 15 points and 15 rebounds for the Nets, while Edmond Sumner chipped in 23 points for Brooklyn. Before the game, the deal that sent Irving and forward Markieff Morris to Dallas for Spencer Dinwiddie, Dorian Finney-Smith and multiple draft picks was announced.

Neither Dinwiddie nor Finney-Smith were available, nor were stars Kevin Durant and Ben Simmons and guard Seth Curry due to injury, leaving coach Jacque Vaughn forced to rotate 11 of his 12 dressed players

"You just got to give credit to our group for being ready to play," Vaughn said. "The optimism and belief that we can win a basketball game with the group we had was (good) to see, and our overall effort and energy and communication was good throughout the night."

Still, Los Angeles' bench still outscored Brooklyn's 38-10.

"That's huge," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said. "We have a really good bench that we really trust, and you saw that tonight, increasing the lead when (George) and Kawhi went to the bench in the first half. ... We really lean on those guys to be good for us."

But Thomas almost single-handedly kept Brooklyn within striking distance. Thomas had 22 in the first half, then electrified the crowd with a combination of 3-pointers and mid-range jumpers, helping Brooklyn lead by 107-99 midway through the fourth.

"I came out hot early," Thomas said. "I didn't know it'd be another 40, but I knew I'd probably have a great game again. Kudos to the guys for believing in me and letting me make decisions down the stretch."

Los Angeles rallied with a 9-0 run and outscored Brooklyn 33-28 in the fourth, keyed by Leonard's nine points in the frame.

"Defensively we were able to get some stops and get out in transition a little bit," Lue said. "Being down eight, we just came out settled down and came out and went on the 9-0 run and took control of the game."

The Nets made 8 of 12 first-quarter 3-pointers and built an eight-point advantage. But the Clippers closed the first with a 10-0 run then George then scored nine in the second, helping the Clippers build an 11-point advantage.

But the Nets closed the half with a 13-4 run, cutting Los Angeles' lead to 55-53 at halftime.

MAVERICKS 124, JAZZ 111

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Josh Green and Jaden Hardy each scored career highs of 29 points and the short-handed Dallas Mavericks, playing without Luka Doncic, stunned the Utah Jazz 124-111 on Monday night after completing a trade for Kyrie Irving.

The Mavericks acquired the eight-time All-Star along with Markieff Morris from the Brooklyn Nets in exchange for Spencer Dinwiddie, Dorian Finney-Smith, a 2029 first-round pick and two future second-round picks.

Irving and Morris arrived in Dallas on Monday to undergo physicals and were not available for the game. But their new team rallied behind Green, who averages 8.1 points, and Hardy, who scores 5.6 per game.

When Green was on the court, the Mavericks outscored the Jazz by an astonishing 39 points and won their first game in eight tries without Doncic, their leading scorer with 33.4 points a game.

CAVALIERS 114, WIZARDS 91

WASHINGTON (AP)—Darius Garland and Jarrett Allen scored 23 points apiece and Donovan Mitchell added 21 to lead Cleveland to a rout of Washington.

All five Cleveland starters were in double figures by halftime, and the Cavaliers won for the fourth time in five games. Evan Mobley finished with 16 points and Isaac Okoro contributed 12.

Kristaps Porzingis scored 18 points for Washington, which has lost three straight following a six-game winning streak. The Wizards were playing without Bradley Beal (left foot soreness) and Kyle Kuzma (left ankle sprain).

Washington led by at least 20 in each of its previous two losses, but the Wizards didn't have to worry about blowing a big lead on this night. In fact, they were never ahead at all.

CELTICS 111, PISTONS 99

DETROIT (AP)—Jayson Tatum started slow and finished strong with 34 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, leading Boston over Detroit.

The All-Star forward missed his first five shots and had as many fouls (three) as field goals after missing 10 shots in the first half. Tatum made three 3-pointers and an array of driving layups in the third, scoring 18 points in the quarter to turn a seven-point halftime lead into a 18-point cushion.

Celtics guard Jaylen Brown, who averages 27 points, missed the game with a non-COVID illness. Sam Hauser filled in, making his first start in two seasons, and had five 3-pointers in the first half when he scored all of his 15 points.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 21 for the Pistons, who have won just one-fourth of their games and are likely vying with Houston and Charlotte for the No. 1 pick and a chance to select 7-foot-3 French phenom Victor Wembanyama.

BULLS 128, SPURS 104

CHICAGO (AP)—Nikola Vucevic had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Andre Drummond set season highs with 21 points and 15 rebounds, and Chicago handed San Antonio its ninth straight loss.

Zach LaVine scored 20 points and DeMar DeRozan had 19, helping the Bulls match a season high with their third straight win. They also got some payback for a loss at San Antonio in October.

It was tied at 85 late in the third quarter when Chicago went on a 23-3 run that buried the team with the second-worst record in the Western Conference. Two more losses and the Spurs will match their worst skid of the season.

Keldon Johnson led San Antonio with 21 points. But the Spurs opened a season-high, nine-game trip on an all-too-familiar note.

Andre Drummond (3) of the Chicago Bulls dunks in the second half against the San Antonio

KINGS 140, ROCKETS 120

HOUSTON (AP)—Keegan Murray had a career-high 30 points and set a franchise rookie record with eight 3-pointers to help Sacramento snap a two-game skid with a win over Houston.

Murray, the fourth overall pick in last year's NBA draft, shot 8 for 12 from beyond the arc on a night when the Kings made 21 3-pointers. The previous team mark for 3s by a rookie was set by Ricky Berry with seven in 1989.

Malik Monk added 20 points off the bench and Domantas Sabonis had 17 points, seven rebounds and 10 assists in the first of consecutive games between the teams. De'Aaron Fox had 16 points and eight assists for Sacramento after missing two games for personal reasons.

Jalen Green had 27 points for the Rockets, who dropped their third straight.

Kings forward Keegan Murray (13) shoots against Houston Rockets forward Usman Garuba (16)

WARRIORS 141, THUNDER 114

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Klay Thompson scored 42 points with a season-high 12 3-pointers, Jordan Poole added 21 points and 12 assists starting in Stephen Curry's place, and the Golden State Warriors beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 141-114 on Monday night.

Thompson sat down for the night to a roaring ovation with 4:41 left to finish 15 for 22 from the floor and 12 of 16 on 3s. Thompson now has eight games with 10 or more 3-pointers, second in NBA history behind Curry's 22.

Andrew Wiggins scored 18 points in Golden State's first game since reigning NBA Finals MVP Curry injured his left leg during Saturday's win against Dallas - and the Warriors went 26 of 50 from deep without the league's career 3-point leader.

BUCKS 127, TRAIL BLAZERS 108

PORTLAND (AP)—Brook Lopez scored 27 points and the Milwaukee Bucks stretched their winning streak to eight games with a 127-108 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Monday night.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 24 points and 13 rebounds as the Bucks led the whole way, pushing their advantage to 26 in the second half.

Damian Lillard led the Blazers with 28 points. Antetokounmpo and Lillard were selected the NBA's players of the week earlier in the day.

NBA approves sale of Phoenix Suns, Mercury to Mat Ishbia

PHOENIX (AP)—Mortgage executive and former Michigan State guard Mat Ishbia is the new majority owner of the Phoenix Suns and WNBA's Phoenix Mercury, after the NBA's board of governors approved his plan to purchase the controlling stake of those franchises from Robert Sarver.

The league announced the approval Monday night, saying the transaction will be finalized later this week. The vote was 29-0, with the Cleveland Cavaliers abstaining, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the final decision had not yet been announced publicly.

Ishbia agreed on Dec. 20 to the deal, one that put the total value of the Suns and Mercury at $4 billion. Ishbia and his brother Justin said then that they would be acquiring more than 50% of the franchises, which includes the entirety of the embattled Sarver's share as well as some holdings from minority partners.

Mat Ishbia will be the Suns' governor, Justin Ishbia will be alternate governor. They now can assume those roles just days before Thursday's NBA trade deadline, and with the Suns squarely in the middle of the Western Conference playoff race.

There are tentative plans to introduce Mat Ishbia on Wednesday at a news conference in Phoenix.

No other sale in NBA history has been completed with a $4 billion valuation of the franchise involved. Joe Tsai bought the Brooklyn Nets and Barclays Center for $3.3 billion in 2019, and Tilman Fertitta purchased the Houston Rockets for $2.2 billion in 2017.

The sale was finalized hours after Jason Rowley — who was the Suns president and CEO — decided to leave the team in anticipation of the leadership changes, a person familiar with the matter told AP. That person, speaking on condition of anonymity because Rowley's resignation was not shared outside of the organization, said Rowley's departure was "shared internally" within the Suns organization on Monday.

Mat Ishbia is the chairman, president and chief executive of United Wholesale Mortgage, which bills itself as the nation's largest mortgage lender. He had to successfully complete a vetting process by the NBA before the transaction could be finalized, and then the league's other owners cast their ballots for or against the move.

Forbes recently listed his net worth as just over $5 billion. Ishbia's company went public in January 2021 and is a rival to Quicken Loans — the company that has Cavaliers owner Dan Gilbert as its founder and chairman.

Mahomes, Hurts aware of significance of this Super Bowl duel

PHOENIX (AP)—Philadelphia Eagles coach Nick Sirianni is thrilled young aspiring football players all over the world will get to watch two Black quarterbacks face each other for the first time in the Super Bowl.

He's also pleased they get to watch two really, really good quarterbacks.

"I'm really excited for both quarterbacks, what they can represent to a ton of kids," Sirianni said at Monday's Super Bowl media night. "Not only are they two African-American quarterbacks, but they're the two best quarterbacks in the NFL this year. First-team All-Pro, second-team All-Pro.

"They both play at the highest level."

There are many storylines for this Super Bowl, but the duel between Philadelphia's Jalen Hurts and Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes is right at the top of the list.

The significance of Sunday's matchup in Glendale, Arizona, isn't lost on Mahomes.

"I think about it a lot," Mahomes said. "The quarterbacks that came before me—Shack Harris, Doug Williams—that laid the foundation for me to be in this position. It goes across all sports. If you think about Jackie Robinson and the people who broke the color barrier in baseball, I wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for them.

"To be lucky enough to be in this position—and play against another great guy like Jalen—it will be a special moment. I'm glad we're here today, but how can we keep moving forward? How can we motivate kids who are younger, who want to follow their dreams to be a quarterback?"

It's not just the quarterbacks who are relishing the groundbreaking matchup. Chiefs running back Jerick McKinnon said players are well aware of what they're witnessing.

"There's history being made," McKinnon said. "That's a beautiful thing. Something I can look back and tell my kids that, 'I was a part of that, I experienced that.' So it's a blessing. This whole experience is a blessing.

"To have that on top, just adds to it."

In addition to being good, both quarterbacks are also tough.

Hurts missed two games late in the season with a shoulder injury that's still bothering him. The Eagles haven't had to lean on him in two lopsided playoff wins. He has 275 yards passing and two TDs along with 73 yards rushing and two scores, pedestrian numbers by his standards.

Mahomes hobbled around on a badly sprained ankle to help the Chiefs beat the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 and advance to their third Super Bowl appearance in four years.

"It's amazing—especially being Black History Month as well," Eagles cornerback Darius Slay said. "I'm thankful for this moment, to be a part of this. This is crazy with two Black quarterbacks in the Super Bowl, one of the biggest games in the world."

Washington's Doug Williams was the first Black quarterback to start and win a Super Bowl following the 1987 season. That's back when Black quarterbacks were fairly rare across the NFL.

This season—35 years later—began with 11 Black QBs starting in Week 1 and now ends with a historic matchup.

Mahomes can become the first two-time winner if he leads the Chiefs to victory on Sunday. Hurts aims to become the fourth Black QB to win the Super Bowl, joining Williams, Mahomes and Russell Wilson.

Steve McNair, Colin Kaepernick, Cam Newton and Wilson also started in a Super Bowl and lost.

Now it's Hurts vs. Mahomes.

After McKinnon heard that Sirianni said the two quarterbacks were the top two in the league, he had a one-word response: "Facts."

"It's going to be a showdown—all four quarters," McKinnon said. "It's going to come down to the last second. Jalen Hurts is phenomenal, I've been watching him since college. The things he does and brings to the table are phenomenal."

AP

Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, right, and Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts speak to the media during the NFL football Super Bowl 57 opening night, Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, in Phoenix.

Super Bowl opening night returns with energetic atmosphere

PHOENIX (AP—Nick Sirianni answered questions about Rocky, Santa Claus and even which of his players on the Philadelphia Eagles he'd want to date his 5-year-old daughter when she grows up.

Welcome to Super Bowl opening night where football talk gives way to the wild and wacky.

The circus atmosphere that kicks off the NFL's biggest week returned Monday for the first time since 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic forced teams to meet the media on video conferences the past two seasons.

Sirianni and the Eagles took the stage first at Footprint Center, home of the Phoenix Suns. "Fly, Eagles, Fly" chants greeted players and coaches before they spent an hour answering wide-ranging questions from more than 2,000 media members.

Red-clad Chiefs fans took over the arena when Kansas City came out, turning it into an indoor version of Arrowhead Stadium.

It was a new experience for many of the Eagles, who have seven holdovers from the team that beat New England in the Super Bowl five years ago.

Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs are here for the third time in four years so they already got a taste of this media extravaganza in Miami in 2020.

For the record, Sirianni loves the Rocky movies. He identifies with Sylvester Stallone's fictional movie character, who is part of Philadelphia's fabric as much as the cheesesteak.

"I live and coach in the greatest sports town in America," Sirianni said. "It means so much to everybody there. That's what you want. When you're a little kid playing in a peewee football game, you want everybody to see you. You want your fans to love it. You want them to be there. You want them wearing green on Friday. You want them to be throwing snowballs at Santa Claus. You want to put talent on display in front of the greatest sports town in America. I love the fact that my kids are growing up in a sports town where football means so much because football means so much to me."

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts, an AP NFL MVP finalist, drew the largest crowd in the early portion. Reporters staked out his spot about an hour before the event started. The first question came from Hall of Fame wide receiver Michael Irvin, an NFL Network analyst.

"I feel like it's not a time to reflect," Hurts said about his journey to stardom. "We came here to finish the job."

Chiefs coach Andy Reid got numerous questions about his time in Philadelphia and food. The cheeseburger fanatic would not name his favorite city to eat outside of Kansas City, Green Bay and Philly.

"They won't let you back in if I do," he said.

Overall, opening night wasn't quite as outrageous as past years.

In Arizona in 2008, a female reporter showed up wearing a white wedding dress and veil and proposed to Tom Brady, who was trying to lead the Patriots to the first 19-0 season in NFL history.

One radio host walked around shirtless wearing a barrel. A television reporter from Mexico asked people to play pin the tail on the donkey and then asked them to toss foam footballs into a basket. Some of the Eagles cheerleaders participated.

Otherwise, it was more about odd questions than odd looks.

Someone asked Mahomes and Sirianni if this was a "must-win game."

Both said yes in the most polite way possible.

"The job is not finished," said Mahomes, who is also an MVP finalist.

Mahomes got the loudest ovation of the night.

Oh, his favorite song of all time is Rihanna's "Umbrella." Rihanna will be the halftime performer but he won't be watching.

"Coach Reid said if we go out there to watch to just keep walking," Mahomes said.

The Eagles (16-3) and Chiefs (16-3) meet on Sunday, both aiming for their second Super Bowl title within five years.

Perhaps the most anxious person in the stadium will be Donna Kelce, mom of All-Pros Jason and Travis.

Donna Kelce, who took part in some of the night's festivities on stage, wore a jersey that was half-green for Jason's Eagles and half-red for Travis' Chiefs. She had No. 87 for Travis on the front and No. 62 for Jason on the back.

Who is the biggest momma's boy?

Donna held up a photo of Travis.

Donna Kelce brings cookies for sons at Super Bowl opener

PHOENIX (AP)—Donna Kelce brought cookies to Super Bowl opening night.

The mother of All-Pros Travis and Jason Kelce surprised her sons during an interview with NFL Network's Michael Irvin with two batches of cookies—one for each.

"It's just been amazing that they've both been able to get to this point in their careers and both enjoy the Super Bowl together," Donna Kelce said. "It's just so amazing."

The Kelces are the first brothers to face each other in the Super Bowl, Travis as a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, Jason as a center for the Philadelphia Eagles.

Donna and her husband, Ed, have mostly kept private over the years, but she's become a minor celebrity as she crisscrosses the country to watch her boys—often in a jersey with Travis' front stitched to Jason's back.

More than 150,000 fans signed a petition for the NFL to have her do the Super Bowl coin toss, but she said in a social media post that the NFL already had someone in place.

NMA Talent Identification Camp registration still open

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ten participants of the first Northern Marianas Athletics Talent Identification Camp are seen in the starting line of the Oleai track and field last Saturday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants are seen doing drills in the first Northern Marianas Athletics Talent Identification Camp last Saturday at the Oleai track and field.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Athletics "Talent Identification Camp" completed its first Saturday camp of the month at the Oleai track and field and registration is still open for the next three camps.

Last Saturday's event was the mid/long distance race; this Saturday, Feb. 11's event is sprints/hurdles; Feb. 18's event is discus/javelin/hammer/shotput throws; and Feb. 25's event is long/high/triple jumps.

The camp costs $5 and includes four sessions. The camp is open to persons ages 14 and up. Interested individuals may register on-line at https://raceroster.com/events/2023/71753/nma-talent-id-camp-2023

Ten athletes joined the first day and NMA general secretary Robin Sapong, said that "it was an overall good turnout, seeing different age groups from youth, seniors, and masters athletes."

Dr. Ron Snyder, NMI national athletics team coach, said at Saturday's event that the camp is "setting the stage for the training. What we see that they can do today, we'll evaluate that against the events that they want to do, then we'll develop a training plan to make it appropriate for them."

He added that the first camp turned out good. "We had some promising newcomers and came close to breaking the NMI record in the 800m in our time trial. I am very pleased [with] the first one."

Sildrey Veloria, a participant and a member of the CNMI National Athletics Team who was recently picked to represent NMI in the Cross Country World Championships in Australia this Feb. 18, said about the camp, "I believe that checking in on the athletes during the off-season to find out what they are doing and how their training is going is a fairly smart idea."

The camp is in anticipation of the upcoming June 2023 4th Oceania Cup and Masters Athletics Championships on Saipan, the July 2023 10th Micronesian Games in the Marshall Islands, and the November 2023 Pacific Mini Games in the Solomon Islands.

The camp is conducted by NMA development officer and coach Elias Rangamar, Snyder, along with some members of the NMA national team.

Members of the camp may potentially be selected to join the national program and other camps as NMA prepares for the 2023 season.

For questions, email Robin Sapong at rsapong@gmail.com or text (670) 788 0929.

Wahoo in the Marianas set for March 4

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Tasi to Table will host the 4th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas Fishing Tournament on March 4.

The trolling competition will award fishermen who catch the heaviest wahoo $2,000, while the second and third heaviest will go home with $1,500 and $1,000, respectively. Total weight, which make up the three heaviest non-placing wahoo, will receive $500.

Pre-registration will be held a day after the event on March 3, 4pm-6pm at the Smiling Cove Marina.

There, officials from Tasi To Table and PSS Youth Fishing Clubs will go over the rules and regulations of the one-day tournament.

The next day, the 4th Annual Wahoo in the Marianas Fishing Tournament will proceed.

All boats must check out at Smiling Cove Marina on March 4, 2023. The Wahoo in the Marianas Fishing Tournament officially begins at 6am and continues throughout the day until 5pm.

The official weigh station is at Smiling Cove Marina. In order for the catch to qualify, the tip of your boat must pass the Smiling Cove Marina's navigational light before 5pm.

As a reminder, organizers said all boats must check in at Smiling Cove Marina regardless of any catch (personally or by contacting tournament officials).

Entrance fee is $200 per boat for one captain and two anglers. Each additional angler will cost $30.

Presentation of awards will take place immediately after official results are received from the weighmaster.

Last year, *Salty Bandits* reeled in a 48.2-lb wahoo to top the 3rd Annual Wahoo in the Marianas. For their efforts, captain Masaki Kitami and crew hand Austin Benavente pocketed the $2,000 top prize and bragging rights for a whole year.

MARK RABAGOSALTY

Bandits captain Masaki Kitami, second from right, and crew hand Austin Benavente, second from left, pose with student volunteers after getting their first place plaque and cash and in-kind prizes during the awards ceremony of last year's Tasi to Table Inc.'s 3rd Annual Wahoo in the Marianas at the Smiling Cove Marina weighing station.

BLUE

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lins rotation.

In other results that afternoon, Grace Christian Academy Eagles 1 defeated Brilliant Star School, 21-13; William S. Reyes Elementary School Kingfishers 2 shut down SIS 2, 21-0.

GES 1 won over Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School 1 via forfeit; WSR 1 edged GTC 2, 23-21; OES 2 trounced BSS, 21-11; Koblerville Elementary School Umangs 1 won against WSR 1, 21-13; GES 1 defeated OES 2, 21-11; GES 2 slipped past GCA 1, 21-10; and GES 2 beat BSS, 21-11.

According to Nick Gross, Public School System Student Support Services Athletic Program director, those teams who were unable to finish their games will resume their play this Friday, Feb. 10.

10

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scholastic Co-ed Elementary Basketball League. Another basketball player, Lance Lerio, earned a chance to vie for the Male Student Athlete of the Year award, for taking the November honors. Lerio was the top scorer for the NMI Junior National Team that participated in the FIBA U15 Oceania Championships in Guam.

Miller completed the nominees list, making it to the honor roll for winning the October award. The Grace Christian Academy student ruled the middle school division of the qualifying legs of the Northern Marianas Athletics/PSS All Schools Cross Country and capped his dominance in the season with a gold medal in the finale.

Chavez also participated in the interscholastic cross countries series and clinched the gold medal in the girls high school 5K race to take NMSA's May honors. The Saipan International School student earlier bagged the January award for notching back-to-back titles in the 7th Saipan Aquathlon.

Pangelinan joined Chavez on the nominees list for winning the April honors. The Marianas High School student anchored the NMI Women's National Team's offense when they played in a series of matches in the NMI Friendship Classic at the University of Guam Fieldhouse. Back at UOG in November, Fatialofa averaged a double-double (20. 5 points and 18 rebounds) in the four games she played during the FIBA U15 Oceania Championships to gain the vote for the NMSA top student for the month.

In Melbourne at the 16th FINA World Championships, Batallones posted two NMI swim records and her efforts were not left unnoticed as she received the NMSA student award for December.

Capping the monthly awardees list and nominees for the Female Student Athlete of the Year award is Jin. The junior golfer gave Team NMI it's lone gold medal in the golf competition in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Game held in June after ruling the women's four-round individual event. The Marianas High School student was also named Best Junior Female Athlete of the Mini Games. ***(PR)***

TAN

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famed Mount Panorama venue at Bathurst.

"Mount Panorama is a world-famous international racing track venue, attracting competitors from across the globe and is the perfect backdrop for the most important cross-country event in the world," said Mayor Ian North of Bathurst Regional Council. The course is very challenging and will encompass hills, mud pits, a sandy beach area with a beach bar in the far zone, and even a short stretch through local vineyards where the runners will have the opportunity to choose which grape variety to run past. In the Billabong area, runners will share the course with a resident population of kangaroos. The course is 2 kilometers long and runners will repeat the course to make their required distance.

The World Athletics Cross Country Championship Bathurst 2023 will comprise the U20 men's (8km) and women's (6km) races, the universal mixed relay (8km), and the senior individual men's and women's races (10km). These World Championship events will be supported by a series of mass participation races. Tan and Veloria will both be racing in the Senior Division in the 10K race.

For the first time in history, masters athletes will be able to stake their claim for glory alongside the world's best cross country athletes at the World Athletics Cross Country Championships. The historic agreement between World Athletics, the Local Organizing Committee for WXC Bathurst 23, and World Masters Athletics will see the World Masters Course Cross Country Championships conducted on the same course as the World Athletics Cross Country Championships on February 18-19, 2023.

Cross country runners aged 35 and older can enter individually but must then be approved by their respective national federations. They will compete across two days of competition with the Masters Teams Relay on Feb. 18 and Masters Individual Championship races on Feb. 19. Dr. Ron Snyder will accompany Tan and Veloria as the coach/team manager, but will also have the chance to compete in the World Masters in the 55-59 Year Old Division. ***(PR)***

Clippers surge late, overcome Thomas' 47 to top Nets, 124-116

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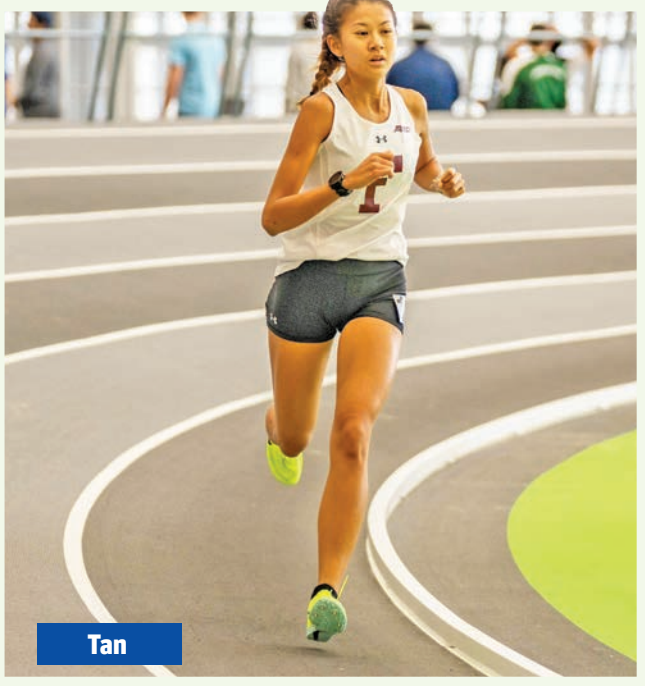
Tan, Veloria off to Cross Country World Championships



Tan

Tania Tan and Sildrey Veloria have been selected to represent the CNMI in the upcoming World Athletics Cross Country Championships 2023 in Bathurst, Australia.

Tan is currently in her final year at Fordham University where she runs on the cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track teams.

Both Tan and Veloria have represented the CNMI in OAA Cross Country Championships—Tan in 2019 and Veloria this past Fall.

In total, 12 Oceania member federations will toe the start at Mount Panorama, which beat the previous five in 1988.

With 90 athletes across the teams, it would almost double the previous best of 48 athletes in the 1991 edition.

The NMI will also join five other island nations to debut for the first time at a World Cross Country Championship.

The World Athletics Cross Country Championships is regarded as the toughest race on the calendar, combining the world's greatest distance runners and challenging terrain to create a unique spectacle in sport. The 2023 event will be the 44th edition of these storied championships and will welcome more than 550 elite athletes from more than 60 countries to the

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Veloria

10 vie for '22 student athlete plums

Five students are vying for the Tan Siu Lin Foundation/Northern Marianas Sports Association Male Student Athlete of the Year award, while the female student category also has five nominees.

Multi-sport athlete Isaiah Aleksenko, who won the 2021 award, is back as a nominee, joining basketball's Derek Tenorio and Lance Lerio, swimming's Juhn Tenorio, and athletics' Michael Miller. All nominees won the student athlete of the month award in 2022 to qualify for the yearly recognition. In the female student category, the nominees are Kaithlyn Chavez (triathlon and athletics), Maria Batallones (swimming), Destiny Pangelinan and Azriel Fatialofa (basketball), and Zhimin Jin (golf).

ATHLETES of the YEAR

Winners of the Male and Female Student Athlete of the Year awards will be announced at the NMSA Banquet scheduled for March 7 at the Hibiscus Hall of Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Aleksenko was the January top performer after dominating the 7th Saipan Aquathlon. Then in December, the 16-year-old Marianas High School student was recognized again for representing the NMI to the 16th FINA World Championships (25m) in Melbourne, Australia and setting four NMI swim records. Juhn Tenorio, another NMI swimmer, earlier competed in the 19th FINA World Championships in Budapest, Hungary and established two new NMI swim marks to earn the Athlete of the Month award in June.

Derek Tenorio, the youngest nominee at 10, was the April winner for helping Koblerville Elementary School-1 rule the IT&E Inter-

See 10 on Page 19

Chavez

Fatialofa

Batallones

Pangelinan

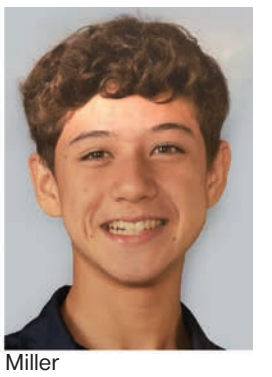
Jin

Aleksenko

D. Tenorio

J. Tenorio

Lerio



Miller

Blue Marlins win co-ed v-ball games

LEIGH GASES

Saipan International School 2 players, right, go up against Kagman Elementary School in the Public School System Co-Ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The late afternoon showers during the Public School System Co-ed Elementary School Volleyball Tournament didn't put a damper on the Kagman Elementary School Blue Marlins as they won two of their games in Pool A last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

The Blue Marlins' first win came against Oleai Elementary School Turtles 2 before the heavy downpour of rain, in a nail-biter 22-20 game.

They then defeated Saipan International School Geckos 2, 21-10, after a short reprieve from the rain which later canceled the rest of the nights' games. The last Blue Marlins game was supposed to be against Garapan Elementary School Mallards 1.

Melanie Cruz, Autumn Herman, Ariani Camacho, Leala Ngiraked, Jaelene Igisomar, Kaya Hetgen, Juan Caraballo, Timothy Galvan, Ricky Kaipat, Damian Tudela, Benaiah Murphy, and Alexander Kileleman make up the Blue Mar-

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